STORIES
OF TODAY
AND YESTERDAY

J. Harvey

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/storiesoftodayye0000unse

STORIES OF TO-DAY AND YESTERDAY

Courtesy of Paul Martin.

"Flashing his light ahead, gripping his hatchet." (See p. 150.)

STORIES OF TO-DAY AND YESTERDAY

Thirty Selected Short Stories
Nine Imitative Stories by Students
Questions for Class Discussion
Directions for Creative Narration

EDITED BY
FREDERICK HOUK LAW, Ph.D.
Head of the Department of English
In the Stuyvesant High School, New York.

Author of "MODERN GREAT AMERICANS" *and*

Editor of
"MODERN SHORT STORIES"
"MODERN ESSAYS AND STORIES"
"MODERN PLAYS: SHORT AND LONG," *and*
"MODERN LIFE AND THOUGHT"

THE CENTURY CO.
New York *London*

COPYRIGHT, 1930, BY THE CENTURY CO.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED, INCLUDING THE
RIGHT TO REPRODUCE THIS BOOK, OR
PORTIONS THEREOF, IN ANY FORM. 310

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

PREFACE

Why should we not encourage students to read and to discuss short stories merely for creative pleasure, as might the members of a literary club coming together for the common enjoyment of books? Why should we not awaken students to a genuine and individual appreciation of the fundamental characteristics of good short-story writing? Why should we not inspire them to the great joy of constructive effort?

The one object of this book is to make reading and writing a pleasure—not a painstaking study, not a memorizing of names and dates and plots, not routine drudgery—but the pleasure known by all lovers of books and by all the numerous members of the ancient and honorable company of those who tell tales for the world's diversion and inspiration.

To our students whose minds are so ready to appreciate, whose hearts are so quick to feel, whose unsteady pens are so willing and so apt—if only we can dip them but a little in Apollo's fire—to those whom we all wish to inspire, because in them is the hope of the future, I dedicate this book.

FREDERICK HOUK LAW.

The Stuyvesant High School,
New York City.

CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE BOOK xi
THE SELECTIONS xi
SUGGESTIONS FOR READING xi
SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY xv
TERMS USED IN DISCUSSING SHORT STORIES xi
TYPES OF STORIES xxi
THIRTY NOTABLE AUTHORS OF SHORT STORIES xxiii
FIFTY SHORT STORIES THAT YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE . . . xxiv
COLLECTIONS OF MODERN SHORT STORIES xxv
BOOKS CONCERNING THE ART OF WRITING SHORT STORIES . xxvi

MADEMOISELLE OLYMPE ZABRISKI .	*Thomas Bailey Aldrich* .	3
FEAR	*H. E. Bates*	18
"JUST IMAGINE . . ."	*Elizabeth Bowen* . . .	24
GOLD-MOUNTED GUNS	*F. R. Buckley*	38
THE LOVE-LETTERS OF SMITH . .	*H. C. Bunner*	48
MR. TRAVERS'S FIRST HUNT . .	*Richard Harding Davis* .	61
THE GREEK INTERPRETER . . .	*A. Conan Doyle* . . .	66
ERNIE MENDENHALL	*Zona Gale*	88
THE LUCK OF ROARING CAMP . .	*Bret Harte*	96
THE AMBITIOUS GUEST	*Nathaniel Hawthorne* . .	110
THE RANSOM OF RED CHIEF . .	*O. Henry*	121
ON THE DARK TRAIL	*Franklin Holt*	135
RIP VAN WINKLE	*Washington Irving* . .	157
THE STRANGE-LOOKING MAN . .	*Fanny Kemble Johnson* .	176
GETTING EVEN	*Thomas Kelly*	181
THE LITTLE MASTER OF THE SKY .	*Manuel Komroff* . . .	185
DREAM-CHILDREN	*Charles Lamb*	198
THE NECKLACE	*Guy de Maupassant* . .	204
GRIMALDI	*Susan Meriwether* . . .	215
THE MAN WITH THE GOOD FACE .	*Frank Luther Mott* . .	227
WHAT WAS IT?	*Fitz-James O'Brien* . .	250
THE OVAL PORTRAIT	*Edgar Allan Poe* . . .	266

		PAGE
Fifty Fathoms Down	*Morgan Robertson*	271
Circumstance	*Harriet Prescott Spofford*	292
The Owl	*Robert Louis Stevenson*	309
The Lady or the Tiger?	*Frank R. Stockton*	321
Mademoiselle	*Elisabeth Finley-Thomas*	331
The Facts in the Case of the Great Beef Contract	*Mark Twain*	349
Father Is Angry	*William Hazlett Upson*	358
So-Long, Old-Timer	*Edmund Ware*	386

Appendix: Imitative Stories by High School Students

Joe McHall's "Lucky" (Based on "The Luck of Roaring Camp")	*Philip Becker*	403
Fate (Based on "The Ambitious Guest")	*Arpad Wigg*	406
The Goody-Goody (Based on "The Ransom of Red Chief")	*Jules P. Wolff*	410
Odu (Based on "Rip Van Winkle")	*Eyolf F. Bronner*	415
Advice—A Reverie (Based on "Dream-Children")	*Warren Young*	421
The Important Document (Based on "The Necklace")	*Jacob Udowitz*	425
The Mystery (Based on "What Was It?")	*Frank J. Spacek, Jr.*	429
The Master (Based on "The Oval Portrait")	*Edward Carr*	434
Money and Mother (Based on "The Lady or the Tiger?")	*Casper T. Olson*	437

ILLUSTRATIONS

"Flashing his light ahead, gripping his hatchet" *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

"He urged his pony forward until it stood side by side with his companion's" 44

"The hounds were well ahead" 62

"They dwelt in a cold spot and a dangerous one" . . 110

"He looked down into a deep mountain glen, wild, lonely, and shagged" 162

"'*En avant,*' I hear him say" 334

"He started after Sherman with the beef" 350

"He's so deaf I pretty nearly ruined my voice yelling" . 362

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

The purpose of *Stories of To-Day and Yesterday* is, first, to arouse in students an interest in reading good short stories; second, to give them a keen appreciation of some of the principal characteristics of good short stories; and third, and perhaps most important of all, to lead them to the very real pleasure of writing short stories for their own enjoyment and the enjoyment of others. This book, therefore, is not merely a volume of selections for reading: it is also a book that concerns the teaching of narration—first, through understanding of content and appreciation of purpose and of form; and second, through original creative effort.

THE SELECTIONS

The stories here printed number thirty in all; thirty-nine, if the stories by students, printed in the Appendix, are included. The selections represent almost as many types of stories as there are titles: an example from every period of American short-story writing, from the time of Washington Irving through that of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe, to the present; a number of British short stories, and one French short story are included in this collection.

SUGGESTIONS FOR READING

The wide variety and unusually large number of short stories included in this volume give the instructor full opportunity to use the book in accordance with the special needs of any particular group or class. The work may proceed in

general harmony with any one of the following plans for reading:

1. Read the Stories in the Order in Which They Are Printed

The instructor may ask the students to read the stories in the order in which they are printed, that is, to read the book from cover to cover. Such reading should prove neither too burdensome in quantity nor too difficult in content and style. The stories have pleasant variety; they represent many important types of writing; they call attention to authors with whom all persons should be familiar.

2. Read the Stories in Accordance with Individual Tastes

The instructor, the class as a whole, or individual students may make selections from any part of the book. Such reading will give opportunity for the expression of individual tastes, and will do much to awaken lively interest and to promote active discussions.

3. Read Stories That Have Rapid Action, Humor, or Surprise

Less advanced students and others who prefer narratives that are especially vibrant with action or strongly touched with humor, will enjoy reading the stories mentioned in the following lists:

FIFTEEN STORIES THAT WILL STRONGLY INTEREST LESS ADVANCED READERS

1. "Mademoiselle Olympe Zabriski"
2. "Gold-mounted Guns"
3. "The Love-Letters of Smith"
4. "Mr. Travers's First Hunt"
5. "The Greek Interpreter"
6. "The Ransom of Red Chief"
7. "On the Dark Trail"
8. "The Necklace"
9. "What Was It?"
10. "Fifty Fathoms Down"

11. "The Owl"
12. "The Lady or the Tiger?"
13. "The Facts in the Case of the Great Beef Contract"
14. "Father Is Angry"
15. "So-Long, Old-Timer"

TEN STORIES OF HUMOR OR SURPRISE

1. "Mademoiselle Olympe Zabriski"
2. "Gold-mounted Guns"
3. "The Love-Letters of Smith"
4. "Mr. Travers's First Hunt"
5. "The Ransom of Red Chief"
6. "Getting Even"
7. "The Necklace"
8. "Grimaldi"
9. "The Facts in the Case of the Great Beef Contract"
10. "Father Is Angry"

TEN STORIES OF ADVENTURE

1. "Gold-mounted Guns"
2. "Mr. Travers's First Hunt"
3. "The Greek Interpreter"
4. "The Ransom of Red Chief"
5. "On the Dark Trail"
6. "What Was It?"
7. "Fifty Fathoms Down"
8. "Circumstance"
9. "The Owl"
10. "So-Long, Old-Timer"

4. Read Stories That Deeply Concern Character

For emphasis on character study in fiction, the following stories are especially suitable:

FIFTEEN CHARACTER STUDIES

1. "Fear"
2. "'Just Imagine . . . .'"
3. "Ernie Mendenhall"
4. "The Luck of Roaring Camp"

5. "The Ambitious Guest"
6. "On the Dark Trail"
7. "Rip Van Winkle"
8. "Getting Even"
9. "The Little Master of the Sky"
10. "The Necklace"'
11. "Grimaldi"
12. "The Man with the Good Face"
13. "The Owl"
14. "The Lady or the Tiger?"
15. "Mademoiselle"

5. Read Stories That Strongly Provoke Thought

Classes of more advanced students will enjoy reading and discussing the following stories, which are especially thought-provoking:

TEN STORIES FOR THOUGHFUL READERS

1. "Fear"
2. "The Ambitious Guest"
3. "The Strange-looking Man"
4. "The Little Master of the Sky"
5. "Dream-Children"
6. "Grimaldi"
7. "The Man with the Good Face"
8. "The Oval Portrait"
9. "Circumstance"
10. "So-Long, Old-Timer"

6. Read the Stories Slowly and Carefully

An excellent method of using this book is to make it the basis of a course of study extending throughout several years, thus giving opportunity to proceed slowly, to discuss every story in full, to cover all the work in detail, and to call for much carefully prepared, progressive work in writing. Such a course would aim at the development of mental ability and the increase of power in expression.

A Five-Year Course in Short-Story Reading and Writing

First Year

1. "Mr. Travers's First Hunt"
2. "The Ransom of Red Chief"
3. "On the Dark Trail"
4. "The Lady or the Tiger?"
5. "The Facts in the Case of the Great Beef Contract"
6. "Father Is Angry"

Second Year

1. "Mademoiselle Olympe Zabriski"
2. "Gold-mounted Guns"
3. "The Love-Letters of Smith"
4. "The Greek Interpreter"
5. "The Luck of Roaring Camp"
6. "So-Long, Old-Timer"

Third Year

1. "Rip Van Winkle"
2. "The Necklace"
3. "Grimaldi"
4. "What Was It?"
5. "The Oval Portrait"
6. "Fifty Fathoms Down"

Fourth Year

1. "Fear"
2. "'Just Imagine . . . '"
3. "The Ambitious Guest"
4. "The Strange-looking Man"
5. "Getting Even"
6. "The Owl"

Fifth Year

1. "Ernie Mendenhall"
2. "The Little Master of the Sky"
3. "Dream-Children"
4. "The Man with the Good Face"
5. "Circumstance"
6. "Mademoiselle"

SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

In whatever way the instructor, the class, or individual students may select the subject-matter, the general method of study, in all cases, should be as follows:

1. Read the Stories for Pleasure

All the stories printed in this book were written for the purpose of giving pleasure, and all have lived because they have done much to bring light or laughter into the world. To take such stories into the class-room and there to shroud them in the spirit of monotonous, uninspired work, is to do violence to the best interests of literature. The motive for reading, for discussion, and for imitative writing should be pleasure. The instructor should encourage pupils to read the stories slowly, appreciatively, and thoughtfully, and should make no demands for arduous study, memorizing of plots or names, or the doing of anything that the members of a literary club, assembled for the study of short stories, might not do merely for pleasure.

2. Discuss the Stories for Pleasure

Instead of holding routine recitations based on the stories, as if they were so many chapters of actual history, the instructor and the members of the class should discuss them as they might be discussed by the officers and members of a literary club, in which the only restraint is that of parliamentary law, and the only driving forces are lively interest and a keen desire for self-expression. The "Questions for Class Discussion," printed after every story, may serve as topics.

3. Write Short Imitations

A most important feature of this book is that it suggests that the reading and the discussion of every story should be followed by the writing of imitations. No other procedure will awaken greater appreciation of the art of the short story, or give the members of a class such a high degree of pleasure. Instructor and students alike will be astonished by the excellence of the work that will be accomplished. Most surprising of all, students will be more original in writing imitative stories than in writing without models.

Special directions for imitative writing appear after every

story. In every instance the directions include five specific suggestions for plots. The entire book, therefore, includes 150 such suggestions. The instructor may permit students to follow these suggestions, or may ask inventive members of the class to form wholly original plans.

As examples of the type of work proposed, and of the kind of work that students will be able to accomplish, a number of short stories, written by students in the ordinary course of class work, are given in the Appendix of this volume. Other students should examine these stories, written by young people, and then endeavor, with every prospect of success, to excel them.

TERMS USED IN DISCUSSING SHORT STORIES

Atmosphere: The mood or tone that characterizes a story.

Characters: The persons whom a story concerns, the major characters being those of great importance, and the minor characters those of slight importance in the narrative.

Characterization: The portrayal of personalities.

Climax: A turning-point, or incident of intense interest, to which the preceding part of the story leads.

Complication or Complexity of Plot: The interweaving of a number of lines of interest that unite to form the plot of a story.

Compression: Saying a great deal in a few words.

Crisis: A turning-point or incident of high interest.

Crucial Situation: The principal situation in a story; the condition of affairs on which the outcome of the story depends.

Contrast: The presentation of opposites.

Decisive Character Trait: An overmastering element of personality that brings about important events in the story.

Dénouement: The final result of the series of incidents that form the plot of a story.

Description: A word-picture of a person, place, or thing.

Dialect: Unusual language peculiar to a definite type of person.

Dialogue: Conversation giving the actual words of the persons who take part in the events of a story.

Dominating Character: The leading person in a story, upon whom the reader centers most interest.

Dramatic Effect: A striking impression produced by unexpected, unusual, or startling incidents.

Emotion: The feeling aroused by any part of a story, and especially by the entire story.

Episode: Any separate incident or complete series of incidents in a story.

Exposition: Presentation of all that is necessary for the reader to know in order that he may understand what follows.

Fancy, or Fantasy: A pleasingly odd and whimsical play of the imagination.

Foreshadowing: Suggestions or hints concerning events to be narrated later in a story.

Human Interest: The strong sympathy aroused by emotional interest in the characters of a story.

Humor: Unexpected or whimsical turns of thought, and ludicrous incidents that tend to arouse smiles or laughter.

Incident: Any one event of the series of related events that make up a story.

Inciting Force: An incident of such power that it sets in motion the series of related incidents that lead to the climax of a story.

Individuality: A style or method of narration peculiar to a single author; also lifelikeness in character-drawing.

Integration of Plot: The bringing together and unifying of the various parts of a story.

Interest: Power to attract and to hold the reader's attention.

Involution of Plot: The weaving together of the various incidents that lead to the climax of a story.

Length: The number of words in which a story is told. A short story usually contains between 1,000 and 10,000 words.

Lesson: The ethical value gained from a story.

Local Color: Details of description and of language that definitely place a story in a particular region.

Material: All that is used in the making of a story, especially characters, incidents, and places.

Outcome: The final result of the series of incidents that form a story.

Pathos: An element in descriptions or in incidents that arouses a feeling of sadness.

Person: Indication of the narrator of a story. Most stories are told in the *third person,* the narrator speaking of other characters and referring to them as "he," "she," and "they." Some stories are told in the *first person,* the narrator telling his own story, and referring to himself with the pronouns "I," "me," "my," and "mine." Stories told in the form of letters employ the *second person.*

Plot: The series of necessary and related incidents in a story, commanding the reader's attention and rising to a definite climax.

Point of View: The place, or the mood, from which the narrator sees the places, characters and events mentioned in a story.

Preparation: Presenting in a story such explanation, description, and narration as will enable the reader to understand and to appreciate what follows.

Purpose: The object for which a story is written.

Realism: Painstaking truth to the facts of life.

Resolution of Plot: The incidents that follow the climax of a story.

Restraint: Maintenance of dignity and control in narration.

Satire: Ridicule of whatever is displeasing or unworthy.

Setting: The general surroundings in which the incidents in a story are said to occur.

Single Effect: The one strong impression toward the production of which every part of a story contributes.

Situation: The condition of affairs at the opening of a story, or at any moment during the story.

Stimulating Power: Power to rouse the reader to strong emotion or to active thought.

Style: The rhetorical characteristics of a story, including vocabulary, phrasing, and the general use of language.

Subordination: Making the parts of a story secondary in character, or contributory to the single effect the story is to produce.

Suspense: Anxiety felt by the reader concerning the outcome of a series of incidents or of an entire story.

Symbolism: Figurative suggestions given by means of persons, places, things, and incidents in a story, typifying ideas that the author wishes to indicate.

Theme: The principal thought that a story indicates.

Time: The duration of events in a story; also the period of history in which the events are supposed to occur.

Unity: Oneness and complete harmony in a story, especially in regard to action, time, place, characters, theme, and emotion.

Verisimilitude: Truth to the facts of life.

TYPES OF STORIES

Of the numerous types of stories, the following are important:

Short Story: A narrative
(1) that is short enough to be read easily at a single sitting;
(2) that is written to produce a single impression on the mind of the reader;
(3) that excludes everything that does not lead to that single impression;
(4) that is complete and final in itself and
(5) that has every indication of reality.

Anecdote: A very brief narrative of an incident in the life of an individual.

Adventure Story: A narrative dealing with unusual and stirring experiences.

Allegory: A symbolic narrative told for the purpose of conveying a moral lesson.

Animal Story: A narrative whose principal interest concerns life in the animal world.

Biographical Story: A narrative based on real or assumed events in the life of an actual person.

Character Story: A narrative whose interest depends principally upon portrayal of personality.

Chronicle: A narrative told as a record of historical fact.

Didactic Story: A narrative written for the distinct purpose of conveying instruction.

Episode: An incident, or a unified series of incidents, forming part of a longer narrative.

Fable: A very short narrative, in which animals often appear as characters, the entire story leading to a moral or lesson.

Folk-Tale: A narrative that has been told for centuries, in various forms, and that has become generally familiar to the race.

Legend: A narrative based on popular belief or feeling, handed down as tradition from father to son.

Love Story: A narrative whose principal interest lies in its presentation of romantic affection.

Mystery Story: A narrative whose principal interest depends largely upon the reader's curiosity to learn the explanation of a puzzling situation or condition.

Novelette: A narrative shorter than a novel, but extended beyond the usual length of the short story; ordinarily a narrative having between 10,000 and 40,000 words.

Parable: A very short symbolic narrative told to give moral or religious instruction.

Poetic Story: A narrative written with unusual charm in subject-matter, style, and treatment.

Problem Story: A narrative whose principal interest lies in its solution of a problem affecting human life.

Psychological Story: A narrative concerned more deeply with mental and spiritual characteristics and reactions than with external events.

Report: A narrative written as a simple, straightforward account, usually for newspaper publication.

Romance: A narrative not bound to the facts of ordinary life, but dealing with unusual incidents, strange adventures, or romantic love.

Scientific Story: A narrative strongly based upon the facts of science. A pseudo-scientific story is a narrative based upon a misleading presentation of the facts of science.

Sketch: A short narrative without plot, usually presenting only one incident or one phase of life.

Story of the Supernatural: A narrative concerning ghosts or other unearthly beings.

Tale: A narrative whose interest depends upon events and characters and not upon plot, climax, or single effect.

Travel Story: A narrative based upon experiences in a foreign land.

Weird Story: A narrative dealing with events of an eerie, uncanny nature.

Whimsical Story: A narrative written in an eccentric, quaint, fantastic, and gently humorous manner.

THIRTY NOTABLE AUTHORS OF SHORT STORIES

Students who wish to read short stories written by notable authors, and of interest to those beginning a study of the field,

will have no difficulty in obtaining in any library collections of stories written by the following authors:

1. Thomas Bailey Aldrich
2. Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews
3. Josephine Dodge Daskam Bacon
4. Algernon Blackwood
5. Henry Cuyler Bunner
6. Ellis Parker Butler
7. Richard Harding Davis
8. A. Conan Doyle
9. Harry Griswold Dwight
10. John Fox
11. Mary E. Wilkins Freeman
12. Bret Harte
13. Nathaniel Hawthorne
14. O. Henry
15. Washington Irving
16. Sarah Orne Jewett
17. Myra Kelly
18. Rudyard Kipling
19. Jack London
20. Brander Matthews
21. Fitz-James O'Brien
22. Thomas Nelson Page
23. Edgar Allan Poe
24. Ernest Thompson Seton
25. Robert Louis Stevenson
26. Frank R. Stockton
27. Ruth McEnery Stuart
28. Booth Tarkington
29. Henry Van Dyke
30. Owen Wister

FIFTY SHORT STORIES THAT YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE

Students who wish to read short stories that many beginners have found interesting should select the following:

1. "Père Antoine's Date Palm": Thomas Bailey Aldrich
2. "Marjory Daw": Thomas Bailey Aldrich
3. "A Kentucky Cardinal": James Lane Allen
4. "The Perfect Tribute": Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews
5. "Pigs Is Pigs": Ellis Parker Butler
6. "A Smile of Fortune": Joseph Conrad
7. "The Upper Berth": F. Marion Crawford
8. "Gallegher": Richard Harding Davis
9. "The Bar Sinister": Richard Harding Davis
10. "The Red-headed League": A. Conan Doyle
11. "In the Pasha's Garden": Harry Griswold Dwight
12. "Christmas Eve on Lonesome": John Fox
13. "The Revolt of Mother": Mary E. Wilkins Freeman
14. "The Man Without a Country": Edward Everett Hale
15. "The Outcasts of Poker Flat": Bret Harte
16. "Mr. Higginbotham's Catastrophe": Nathaniel Hawthorne
17. "Rappaccini's Daughter": Nathaniel Hawthorne
18. "The Soul of the Great Bell": Lafcadio Hearn

19. "The Gift of the Magi": O. Henry
20. "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow": Washington Irving
21. "The Legend of the Moor's Legacy": Washington Irving
22. "The Spectre Bridegroom": Washington Irving
23. "The Monkey's Paw": W. W. Jacobs
24. "The Madonna of the Future": Henry James
25. "Hart's Nephew's Hold-up": Thomas A. Janvier
26. "The Man Who Would Be King": Rudyard Kipling
27. "Without Benefit of Clergy": Rudyard Kipling
28. "The Brushwood Boy": Rudyard Kipling
29. "Wee Willie Winkie": Rudyard Kipling
30. "The Story of a Story": Brander Matthews
31. "The Piece of String": Guy de Maupassant
32. "The Day of the Dog": George Barr McCutcheon
33. "The Diamond Lens": Fitz-James O'Brien
34. "Marse Chan": Thomas Nelson Page
35. "Meh Lady": Thomas Nelson Page
36. "The Trouble at St. James": Samuel Mintern Peck
37. "The Murders in the Rue Morgue": Edgar Allan Poe
38. "The Pit and the Pendulum": Edgar Allan Poe
39. "The Gold Bug": Edgar Allan Poe
40. "The Mystery of Marie Roget": Edgar Allan Poe
41. "The Purloined Letter": Edgar Allan Poe
42. "The Black Cat": Edgar Allan Poe
43. "The Ruby of Kishmore": Howard Pyle
44. "The Biography of a Grizzly": Ernest Thompson Seton
45. "The Veiled Lady of Stamboul": F. Hopkinson Smith
46. "The Sire de Maletroit's Door": Robert Louis Stevenson
47. "The Merry Men": Robert Louis Stevenson
48. "Monsieur Beaucaire": Booth Tarkington
49. "The Other Wise Man": Henry Van Dyke
50. "The Stolen Story": Jesse Lynch Williams

COLLECTIONS OF MODERN SHORT STORIES

Students who wish to read good modern short stories should consult the following volumes:

The Best Short Stories, edited annually since 1915 by Edward J. O'Brien

The Best British Short Stories, edited annually since 1922 by Edward J. O'Brien

The Best French Short Stories, edited annually since 1923 by Richard Eaton

The Best Continental Short Stories, edited annually since 1923 by Richard Eaton

The O. Henry Memorial Prize Stories, published annually since 1918 by the O. Henry Prize Memorial Committee, with an introduction by Blanche Colton Williams

BOOKS CONCERNING THE ART OF WRITING SHORT STORIES

Students who wish to study the art of writing short stories should consult any of the following books:

Albright, Evelyn M., *The Short Story—Its Principles and Structure* (The Macmillan Company, 1907)

Barrett, Charles Raymond, *Short Story Writing: A Practical Treatise on the Art of the Short Story* (The Baker & Taylor Company)

Canby, Henry Seidel, *A Study of the Short Story* (Henry Holt and Company, 1913)

Clark, Glenn, *A Manual of the Short Story Art* (The Macmillan Company, 1922)

Cross, E. A., *The Short Story—A Technical and Critical Study* (A. C. McClurg & Co., 1914)

Esenwein, J. Berg, *Writing the Short Story* (Home Correspondence School, 1908)

Frederick, John T., *A Handbook of Short Story Writing* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1924)

Grabo, Carl H., *The Art of the Short Story* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914)

Hamilton, Clayton, *Materials and Methods of Fiction* (Doubleday, Page & Co., 1918)

Matthews, Brander, *The Short Story* (American Book Company, 1907)

Pitkin, Walter B., *How to Write Short Stories* (Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1923)

Wells, Carolyn, *The Technique of the Mystery Story* (Home Correspondence School, 1913)

Williams, Blanche Colton, *A Handbook on Story Writing* (Dodd, Mead & Company, 1917)

STORIES OF TO-DAY AND YESTERDAY

STORIES OF TO-DAY AND YESTERDAY

MADEMOISELLE OLYMPE ZABRISKI*

A PIECE OF CLUB GOSSIP

By Thomas Bailey Aldrich

Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1836–1907), noted as poet, short-story writer, and novelist, was born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. In his *Story of a Bad Boy* (1870), in which he himself is the central figure, he gives an amusing account of his own boyhood. He began mature life in New York City, where he became a contributor to periodicals, and later an editor. In 1865 he removed to Boston, where for many years he edited *Every Saturday*. From 1881 to 1890 he was editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. He wrote with marked originality of conception, and with keen interest in the romantic and unusual aspects of New England life. Among his best works are the following: *Marjory Daw and Other People* (1873), *Prudence Palfrey* (1874), *The Queen of Sheba* (1877), *A Rivermouth Romance* (1877), *The Stillwater Tragedy* (1880), *An Old Town by the Sea* (1873), and *From Ponkapog to Pesth* (1883).

WE are accustomed to speak with a certain light irony of the tendency which women have to gossip, as if the sin itself, if it is a sin, were of the gentler sex, and could by no chance be a masculine peccadillo. So far as my observation goes, men are as much given to small talk as women, and it is undeniable that we have produced the highest type of gossiper extant. Where will you find, in or out of literature, such another droll, delightful, chatty busybody as Samuel

* Reprinted from *The Atlantic Monthly*, October, 1873.

Pepys, Esq., Secretary to the Admiralty in the reigns of those fortunate gentlemen Charles II. and James II. of England? He is the king of tattlers, as Shakespeare is the king of poets.

If it came to a matter of pure gossip, I would back Our Club against the Sorosis or any women's club in existence. Whenever you see in our drawing-room four or five young fellows lounging in easy-chairs, cigar in hand, and now and then bringing their heads together over the small round Japanese table which is always the pivot of these social circles, you may be sure they are discussing Tom's engagement, or Dick's extravagance, or Harry's hopeless passion for the younger Miss Fleurdelys. It is here that old Tippleton gets execrated for that everlasting *bon mot* of his which was quite a success at dinner-parties forty years ago; it is here the belle of the season passes under the scalpels of merciless young surgeons; it is here B's financial condition is handled in a way that would make B's hair stand on end; it is here, in short, that everything is canvassed,—everything that happens in our set, I mean, much that never happens, and a great deal that could not possibly happen. It was at Our Club that I learned the particulars of the Van Twiller affair.

It was great entertainment to Our Club, the Van Twiller affair, though it was rather a joyless thing, I fancy, for Van Twiller. To understand the case fully, it should be understood that Ralph Van Twiller is one of the proudest and most sensitive men living. He is a lineal descendant of Wouter Van Twiller, the famous old Dutch governor of New York,—Nieuw Amsterdam, as it was then; his ancestors have always been burgomasters or admirals or generals, and his mother is the Mrs. Vanrensselaer Vanzandt Van Twiller whose magnificent place will be pointed out to you on the right bank of the Hudson, as you pass up the historic river towards Idlewild. Ralph is about twenty-five years old. Birth made him a gentleman, and the rise of real estate—some of it in the family since the old governor's time—made him a millionaire. It was a kindly fairy that stepped in and made him a good fellow also. Fortune, I take it, was in her most jocund

mood when she heaped her gifts in this fashion on Van Twiller, who was, and will be again, when this cloud blows over, the flower of Our Club.

About a year ago there came a whisper—if the word "whisper" is not too harsh a term to apply to what seemed a mere breath floating gently through the atmosphere of the billiard-room—imparting the intelligence that Van Twiller was in some kind of trouble. Just as everybody suddenly takes to wearing square-toed boots, or to drawing his neck-scarf through a ring, so it became all at once the fashion, without any preconcerted agreement, for everybody to speak of Van Twiller as a man in some way under a cloud. But what the cloud was, and how he got under it, and why he did not get away from it, were points that lifted themselves into the realm of pure conjecture. There was no man in the club with strong enough wing to his imagination to soar to the supposition that Van Twiller was embarrassed in money matters. Was he in love? That appeared nearly as impossible; for if he had been in love all the world—that is, perhaps a hundred first families—would have known all about it instantly.

"He has the symptoms," said Delaney, laughing. "I remember once when Jack Flemming—"

"Ned!" cried Flemming, "I protest against any allusion to that business."

This was one night when Van Twiller had wandered into the club, turned over the magazines absently in the reading-room, and wandered out again without speaking ten words. The most careless eye would have remarked the great change that had come over Van Twiller. Now and then he would play a game of billiards with Bret Harte or John Hay, or stop to chat a moment in the vestibule with Whitelaw Reid; but he was an altered man. When at the club, he was usually to be found in the small smoking-room up stairs, seated on a fauteuil fast asleep, with the last number of *The Nation* in his hand. Once if you went to two or three places of an evening, you were certain to meet Van Twiller at them all. You seldom met him in society now.

By and by came whisper number two, a whisper more emphatic than number one, but still untraceable to any tangible mouth-piece. This time the whisper said Van Twiller *was* in love. But with whom? The list of possible Mrs. Van Twillers was carefully examined by experienced hands, and a check placed against a fine old Knickerbocker name here and there, but nothing satisfactory arrived at. Then that same still small voice of rumor, but now with an easily detected staccato sharpness to it, said that Van Twiller was in love—with an actress! Van Twiller, whom it had taken all these years and all this waste of raw material in the way of ancestors to bring to perfection,—Ralph Van Twiller, the net result and flower of his race, the descendant of Wouter, the son of Mrs. Vanrensselaer Vanzandt Van Twiller,—in love with an actress! That was too ridiculous to be believed, —and so everybody believed it.

Six or seven members of the club abruptly discovered in themselves an unsuspected latent passion for the histronic art. In squads of two or three they stormed successively all the theatres in town,—Booth's, Wallack's, Daly's Fifth Avenue (not burnt down then), and the Grand Opera House. Even the shabby homes of the drama over in the Bowery, where the Germanic Thespius has not taken out his naturalization papers, underwent rigid exploration. But no clew was found to Van Twiller's mysterious attachment. The *opéra bouffe*, which promised the widest field for investigation, produced absolutely nothing, not even a crop of suspicions. One night, after several weeks of this, Delaney and I fancied we caught a glimpse of Van Twiller in the private box of an up-town theatre, where some thrilling trapeze performance was going on, which we did not care to sit through; but we concluded afterwards it was only somebody that looked like him. Delaney, by the way, was unusually active in this search. I dare say he never quite forgave Van Twiller for calling him Muslin Delaney. Ned is fond of ladies' society, and that's a fact.

The Cimmerian darkness which surrounded Van Twiller's

inamorata left us free to indulge in the wildest conjectures. Whether she was black-tressed Melpomene, with a bowl and dagger, or Thalia, with the fair hair and the laughing face, was only to be guessed at. It was popularly conceded, however, that Van Twiller was on the point of forming a dreadful *mésalliance.*

Up to this period he had visited the club regularly. Suddenly he ceased to appear. He was not to be seen on Broadway, or in the Central Park, or at the houses he generally frequented. His chambers—and mighty comfortable ones they were—on Thirty-fourth Street were deserted. He had dropped out of the world, shot like a bright particular star from his orbit in the heaven of the best society.

"Where's Van Twiller?"

"Who's seen Van Twiller?"

"What has become of Van Twiller?"

Delaney picked up the *Evening Post,* and read—with a solemnity that betrayed young Firkins into exclaiming, "By Jove now!"—

"Married, on the 10th instant, by the Rev. Friar Laurence, at the residence of the bride's uncle, Montague Capulet, Esq., Miss Adrienne Le Couvreur to Mr. Ralph Van Twiller, both of this city. No cards."

"It strikes me," said Frank Livingstone, who had been ruffling the leaves of a magazine at the other end of the table, "that you fellows are in a great fever about Van Twiller."

"So we are."

"Well, he has simply gone out of town."

"Where?"

"Up to the old homestead on the Hudson."

"It's an odd time of year for a fellow to go into the country."

"He has gone to visit his mother," said Livingstone.

"In February?"

"I didn't know, Delaney, there was any statute in force prohibiting a man from visiting his mother in February if he wants to."

Delaney made some light remark about the pleasure of communing with Nature with a cold in her head, and the topic was dropped.

Livingstone was hand in glove with Van Twiller, and if any man shared his confidence it was Livingstone. He was aware of the gossip and speculation that had been rife in the club, but he either was not at liberty, or did not think it worth while, to relieve our curiosity. In the course of a week or two it was reported that Van Twiller was going to Europe; and go he did. A dozen of us went down to the *Scotia* to see him off. It was refreshing to have something as positive as the fact that Van Twiller had sailed.

Shortly after Van Twiller's departure the whole thing came out. Whether Livingstone found the secret too heavy a burden, or whether it transpired through some indiscretion on the part of Mrs. Vanrensselaer Vanzandt Van Twiller, I cannot say; but one evening the entire story was in the possession of the club.

Van Twiller had actually been very deeply interested,—not in an actress, for the legitimate drama was not her humble walk in life, but—in Mademoiselle Olympe Zabriski, whose really perilous feats on the trapeze had astonished New York the year before, though they had failed to attract Delaney and me the night we wandered into the up-town theatre on the trail of Van Twiller's mystery.

That a man like Van Twiller should be fascinated for an instant by a common circus-girl seems incredible; but it is always the incredible thing that happens. Besides, Mademoiselle Olympe was not a common circus-girl; she was a most daring and startling gymnaste, with a beauty and a grace of movement that gave to her audacious performance almost an air of prudery. Watching her wondrous dexterity and pliant strength, both exercised without apparent effort, it seemed the most natural proceeding in the world that she should do those unpardonable things. She had a way of melting from one graceful posture into another, like the dissolving figures thrown from a stereopticon. She was like a lithe,

radiant shape out of the Grecian mythology, now poised up there above the gas-lights, and now gleaming through the air like a slender gilt arrow.

I am describing Mademoiselle Olympe as she appeared to Van Twiller on the first occasion when he strolled into the theatre where she was performing. To me she was a girl of eighteen or twenty years of age (maybe she was much older, for pearl-powder and distance keep these people perpetually young), slightly but exquisitely built, with sinews of silver wire; rather pretty, perhaps, after a manner, but showing plainly the effects of the exhaustive drafts she was making on her physical vitality. Now, Van Twiller was an enthusiast on the subject of calisthenics. "If I had a daughter," Van Twiller used to say, "I wouldn't send her to a boarding-school, or a nunnery; I'd send her to a gymnasium for the first five years. Our American women have no physique. They are lilies, pallid, pretty,—and perishable. You marry an American woman, and what do you marry? A headache. Look at English girls. They are at least roses, and last the season through."

Walking home from the theatre that first night it flitted through Van Twiller's mind that if he could give this girl's set of nerves and muscles to any one of the two hundred high-bred women he knew, he would marry her on the spot and worship her forever.

The following evening he went to see Mademoiselle Olympe again. "Olympe Zabriski," he thought, as he sauntered through the lobby, "what a queer name! Olympe is French, and Zabriski is Polish. It is her *nom de guerre,* of course; her real name is probably Sarah Jones. What kind of creature can she be in private life, I wonder? I wonder if she wears that costume all the time, and if she springs to her meals from a horizontal bar. Of course she rocks the baby to sleep on the trapeze." And Van Twiller went on making comical domestic tableaux of Mademoiselle Zabriski, like the clever, satirical dog he was, until the curtain rose.

This was on a Friday. There was a *matinée* the next day, and he attended that, though he had secured a seat for the

usual evening entertainment. Then it became a habit of Van Twiller's to drop into the theatre for half an hour or so every night, to assist at the interlude, in which she appeared. He cared only for her part of the program, and timed his visits accordingly. It was a surprise to himself when he reflected, one morning, that he had not missed a single performance of Mademoiselle Olympe for two weeks.

"This will never do," said Van Twiller. "Olympe"—he called her Olympe, as if she were an old acquaintance, and so she might have been considered by that time—"is a wonderful creature; but this will never do. Van, my boy, you must reform this altogether."

But half past nine that night saw him in his accustomed orchestra chair, and so on for another week. A habit leads a man so gently in the beginning that he does not perceive he is led,—with what silken threads and down what pleasant avenues it leads him! By and by the soft silk threads become iron chains, and the pleasant avenues, Avernus!

Quite a new element had lately entered into Van Twiller's enjoyment of Mademoiselle Olympe's ingenious feats,—a vaguely born apprehension that she might slip from that swinging bar, that one of the thin cords supporting it might snap, and let her go headlong from the dizzy height. Now and then, for a terrible instant, he would imagine her lying a glittering, palpitating heap at the foot-lights, with no color in her lips! Sometimes it seemed as if the girl were tempting this kind of fate. It was a hard, bitter life, and nothing but poverty and sordid misery at home could have driven her to it. What if she should end it all some night, by just unclasping that little hand? It looked so small and white from where Van Twiller sat!

This frightful idea fascinated while it chilled him, and helped to make it nearly impossible for him to keep away from the theatre. In the beginning his attendance had not interfered with his social duties or pleasures; but now he came to find it distasteful after dinner to do anything but read, or walk the streets aimlessly, until it was time to go to the play. When that was over, he was in no mood to go any-

where but to his rooms. So he dropped away by insensible degrees from his habitual haunts, was missed, and began to be talked about at the club. Catching some intimation of this, he ventured no more in the orchestra stalls, but shrouded himself behind the draperies of the private box in which Delaney and I thought we saw him on one occasion.

Now, I find it very perplexing to explain what Van Twiller was wholly unable to explain to himself. He was not in love with Mademoiselle Olympe. He had no wish to speak to her, or to hear her speak. Nothing could have been easier, and nothing further from his desire, than to know her personally. A Van Twiller personally acquainted with a strolling female acrobat! Good heavens! That was something possible only with the discovery of perpetual motion. Taken from her theatrical setting, from her lofty perch, so to say, on the trapeze-bar, and Olympe Zabriski would have shocked every aristocratic fibre in Van Twiller's body. He was simply fascinated by her marvellous grace and *élan,* and the magnetic recklessness of the girl. It was very young in him and very weak, and no member of the Sorosis, or all the Sorosisters together, could have been more severe on Van Twiller than he was on himself. To be weak, and to know it, is something of a punishment for a proud man. Van Twiller took his punishment, and went to the theatre, regularly.

"When her engagement comes to an end," he meditated, "that will finish the business."

Mademoiselle Olympe's engagement finally did come to an end, and she departed. But her engagement had been highly beneficial to the treasury-chest of the up-town theatre, and before Van Twiller could get over missing her, she had returned from a short western tour, and her immediate reappearance was underlined on the play-bills.

On a dead-wall opposite the windows of Van Twiller's sleeping-room there appeared, as if by magic, an aggressive poster with MADEMOISELLE OLYMPE ZABRISKI on it in letters at least a foot high. This thing stared him in the face when he woke up, one morning. It gave him a sensation as if she had called on him overnight, and left her card.

From time to time through the day he regarded that poster with a sardonic eye. He had pitilessly resolved not to repeat the folly of the previous month. To say that this moral victory cost him nothing would be to deprive it of merit. It cost him many internal struggles. It is a fine thing to see a man seizing his temptation by the throat, and wrestling with it, and trampling it under foot, like St. Anthony. This was the spectacle Van Twiller was exhibiting to the angels.

The evening Mademoiselle Olympe was to make her reappearance, Van Twiller, having dined at the club and feeling more like himself than he had felt for weeks, returned to his chamber, and, putting on a dressing-gown and slippers, piled up the greater portion of his library about him, and fell to reading assiduously. There is nothing like a quiet evening at home with some slight intellectual occupation, after one's feathers have been stroked the wrong way.

When the lively French clock on the mantel-piece,—a base of malachite surmounted by a flying bronze Mercury with its arms spread gracefully on the air, and not remotely suggestive of Mademoiselle Olympe in the act of executing her grand flight from the trapeze,—when the clock, I repeat, struck nine, Van Twiller paid no attention to it. That was certainly a triumph. I am anxious to render Van Twiller all the justice I can, at this point of the narrative, inasmuch as when the half-hour sounded musically, like a crystal ball dropping into a silver bowl, he rose from the chair automatically, thrust his feet into his walking-shoes, threw his overcoat across his arm, and strode out of the room.

To be weak and to scorn your weakness, and not to be able to conquer it, is, as has been said, a hard thing; and I suspect it was not with unalloyed satisfaction that Van Twiller found himself taking his seat in the back part of the private box night after night during the second engagement of Mademoiselle Olympe. It was so easy not to stay away!

In this second edition of Van Twiller's fatuity, his case was even worse than before. He not only thought of Olympe quite a number of times between breakfast and dinner, he not only attended the interlude regularly, but he began, in spite

of himself, to occupy his leisure hours at night by dreaming of her. This was too much of a good thing, and Van Twiller regarded it so. Besides, the dream was always the same,—a harrowing dream, a dream singularly adapted to shattering the nerves of a man like Van Twiller. He would imagine himself seated at the theatre (with all the members of Our Club in the parquette), watching Mademoiselle Olympe as usual, when suddenly that young lady would launch herself desperately from the trapeze, and come flying through the air like a firebrand hurled at his private box. Then the unfortunate man would wake up with cold drops standing on his forehead.

There is one redeeming feature in this infatuation of Van Twiller's which the sober moralist will love to look upon,—the serene unconsciousness of the person who caused it. She went through her *rôle* with admirable aplomb, drew her salary, it may be assumed, punctually, and appears from first to last to have been ignorant that there was a miserable slave wearing her chains nightly in the left-hand proscenium-box.

That Van Twiller, haunting the theatre with the persistency of an ex-actor, conducted himself so discreetly as not to draw the fire of Mademoiselle Olympe's blue eyes, shows that Van Twiller, however deeply under a spell, was not in love. I say this, though I think if Van Twiller had not been Van Twiller, if he had been a man of no family and no position and no money, if New York had been Paris, and Thirty-fourth Street a street in the Latin Quarter—but it is useless to speculate on what might have happened. What did happen is sufficient.

It happened, then, in the second week of Queen Olympe's second unconscious reign, that an appalling Whisper floated up the Hudson, effected a landing at a point between Spuyten Duyvel Creek and Cold Spring, and sought out a stately mansion of Dutch architecture standing on the bank of the river. The Whisper straightway informed the lady dwelling in this mansion that all was not well with the last of the Van Twillers, that he was gradually estranging himself from his peers, and wasting his nights in a play-house watching a misguided

young woman turning unmaidenly summersaults on a piece of wood attached to two ropes.

Mrs. Vanrensselaer Vanzandt Van Twiller came down to town by the next train to look into this little matter.

She found the flower of the family taking an early breakfast, at 11 A. M., in his cosey apartments on Thirty-fourth Street. With the least possible circumlocution she confronted him with what rumor had reported of his pursuits, and was pleased, but not too much pleased, when he gave her an exact account of his relations with Mademoiselle Zabriski, neither concealing nor qualifying anything. As a confession, it was unique, and might have been a great deal less entertaining. Two or three times, in the course of the narrative, the matron had some difficulty in preserving the gravity of her countenance. After meditating a few minutes, she tapped Van Twiller softly on the arm with the tip of her parasol, and invited him to return with her the next day up the Hudson and make a brief visit at the home of his ancestors. He accepted the invitation with outward alacrity and inward reluctance.

When this was settled, and the worthy lady had withdrawn, Van Twiller went directly to the establishment of Messrs Ball, Black, and Company, and selected, with unerring taste, the finest diamond bracelet procurable. For his mother? Dear me, no! She had the family jewels.

I would not like to state the enormous sum Van Twiller paid for this bracelet. It was such a clasp of diamonds as would have hastened the pulsation of a patrician wrist. It was such a bracelet as Prince Camaralzaman might have sent to the Princess Badoura, and the Princess Badoura—might have been very glad to get.

In the fragrant Levant morocco case, where these happy jewels lived when they were at home, Van Twiller thoughtfully placed his card, on the back of which he had written a line begging Mademoiselle Olympe Zabriski to accept the accompanying trifle from one who had witnessed her graceful performances with interest and pleasure. This was not done inconsiderately. "Of course I must enclose my card,

as I would to any lady," Van Twiller had said to himself; "a Van Twiller can neither write an anonymous letter nor make an anonymous present." Blood entails its duties as well as its privileges.

The casket despatched to its destination, Van Twiller felt easier in his mind. He was under obligations to the girl for many an agreeable hour that might otherwise have passed heavily. He had paid the debt, and he had paid it *en prince,* as became a Van Twiller. He spent the rest of the day in looking at some pictures at Goupil's, and at the club, and in making a few purchases for his trip up the Hudson. A consciousness that this trip up the Hudson was a disorderly retreat came over him unpleasantly at intervals.

When he returned to his rooms late at night, he found a note lying on the writing-table. He started as his eye caught the words "—— Theatre" stamped in carmine letters on one corner of the envelope. Van Twiller broke the seal with trembling fingers.

Now, this note some time afterwards fell into the hands of Livingstone, who showed it to Stuyvesant, who showed it to Delaney, who showed it to me, and I copied it as a literary curiosity. The note ran as follows:—

MR. VAN TWILLER, DEAR SIR:—i am verry greatful to you for that Bracelett. it come just in the nic of time for me. The Mademoiselle Zabriski dodg is about plaid out. My beard is getting to much for me. i shall have to grow a mustash and take to some other line of busyness, i dont no what now, but will let you no. You wont feel bad if i sell that Bracelett. i have seen Abrahams Moss and he says he will do the square thing. Pleas accep my thanks for youre Beautifull and Unexpected present.

Youre respecfull servent,
CHARLES MONTMORENCI WALTERS.

The next day Van Twiller neither expressed nor felt any unwillingness to spend a few weeks with his mother at the old homestead.

And then he went abroad.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What kind of story does the title seem to indicate?
2. What does the subordinate title do for the story?
3. What is gained by making reference to Samuel Pepys? Tell something further concerning Pepys. Consult any encyclopedia for information. Read a page or two from Pepys's *Diary*, and report the nature of what you read.
4. Why does the author create an imaginary club?
5. How does the author relate the story to famous works of literature and to well-known literary figures?
6. What are Van Twiller's principal characteristics?
7. How do Van Twiller's characteristics affect the plot of the story?
8. How does the author definitely relate the story to actual places in New York City?
9. Make a list of old New York City places, people, and customs to which reference is made in this story.
10. How does the author awaken a feeling of suspense?
11. Into what two principal divisions may the story be separated?
12. Why does the author employ so long an introduction to the principal story?
13. What are the reader's first impressions of Mademoiselle Olympe Zabriski?
14. How does Mademoiselle Olympe Zabriski appear to excel ordinary women?
15. By what gradual steps does Van Twiller become infatuated with Mademoiselle Olympe Zabriski?
16. Why is the ending of the story altogether surprising?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

The plot of "Mademoiselle Olympe Zabriski" is founded on a mistake made by a very fastidious person. Mistakes, unless they have serious results, are common causes of amusement. We laugh at mistakes that we ourselves make. The humor of "Mademoiselle Olympe Zabriski" lies in the mistake itself and also in the character of the person who makes it. The error would have been laughable in any case, but it is twice as laughable when made by a man of Van Twiller's aristocratic personality. By strongly emphasizing Van Twiller's feeling of general superiority and his aristocratic aloofness, the author greatly increases the humor of the story. He creates suspense by keeping the reader in as great ignorance as were Van Twiller's friends, and by showing, step by step, Van Twiller's increasing infatuation. When he has made com-

plete preparation, the author suddenly announces, by means of a badly spelled note, the surprising dénouement. Then he ends the story at once.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, think of some mistake at which you laughed. Then think of some person who would be more than ordinarily embarrassed by making such an error, or of some situation in which the mistake would be unusually laughable. Use much space in developing character and situation. Show, by gradual steps, how the mistake develops. Last of all, end abruptly with a really astonishing conclusion; that is, show that the facts in the case are altogether different from those that the principal character has in mind.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. At a masquerade, a boy who prides himself on his power to lead girls to like him selects a graceful masked dancer, whose bright eyes fascinate him. Later, on unmasking, he discovers that he selected the grandmother of a popular young lady.
2. A person assumes that a large private house is a hotel, and acts accordingly, to his final embarrassment.
3. A conceited person confuses two people who are twins, and thereby greatly embarrasses himself by saying what is most inappropriate.
4. A person interested in giving charity to the poor assumes that a person of great wealth is a poor person, and makes most absurd gifts.
5. At a public reception, a man of great natural dignity assumes that another man is a servant, and treats him accordingly. After a series of amusing incidents, he learns that the man whom he has taken for a servant is the guest of honor, whom he had most wished to please.

FEAR *

By H. E. Bates

H. E. Bates was born in 1905 in the Nene Valley, Northhamptonshire, England, where he still lives. Much of his childhood he spent with his grandfather, a whimsical, lovable old man whose influence appears in "Fear," and also in various other stories which Mr. Bates gathered together under the title, *The Day's End*. H. E. Bates is the author of two novels, *The Two Sisters*, written when he was nineteen, and *Catherine Foster* (1929); a play; a fantasy for children; and various short stories.

ON the horizon three separate thunderstorms talked darkly to each other.

The hut where little Richard and his grandfather had taken shelter was already green with darkness, its air stifling and warm, and the trees that surrounded it purple and heavy with whispers. When the boy heard sounds coming from the wood he would turn upwards a pair of great eyes, faint-yellow with fear, and ask in an awed way:—

"What's the matter, grandfather? What makes it dark?"

Sometimes the man would scratch his beard and say nothing, at another grunt and say, "Don't you worry yourself," and at a third, "You ain't frightened, are you? You're too big a boy to be frightened. You sit still. You'll wear your breeches out."

But the child would never cease to cast his great swollen eyes about the hut, fidget on trembling haunches, and show that he was afraid of the silent darkness and the growls of thunder which dropped into it, reminding him of the voices of cows and dogs. Thus he saw nothing tiresome in repeating:—

* From *The Nation and Athenæum*. Reprinted by special permission of H. E. Bates and *The Nation and Athenæum*.

"What's the matter, grandfather? What makes it dark?"

Each time he said this there seemed less to be seen in the hut, and not much outside either, where the three thunderstorms grew angrier and angrier with each other. In the wood the trees began to open their arms in readiness to catch the approaching rain. When this did not come the old man whetted his soft lips, told the boy he would sing him something, and began a ballad.

Beyond the first note or two, however, the boy did not listen, and in a few moments the thin tune gave up its exploration of the stagnant air and the man said again:—

"You sit still. There's nothing to hurt."

"What's it dark for, then?" persisted the boy.

"It's going to rain," he was told.

He could not understand this.

"Yesterday it rained and the sun shone," he said. "Why doesn't the sun shine now?"

"The sun ain't here."

"Then where's it gone?" he naïvely asked.

"Don't you worry."

And again it thundered. Now the boy could scarcely see his grandfather. When all was silent again he went to the door and peeped out.

"What makes the sky green?" he asked.

"It ain't green!" his grandfather declared.

"It is," he persisted. "It's green like Nancy's hat. What makes it green?"

"It's going to rain," was the answer. "That's all. You be quiet."

He wept in reply. As he looked up through the film of his tears it seemed as if the black sky was pushing the trees down on the hut, and that before long they would crush it and bury him. "I want to go home," he whispered, but the man did not answer. For a long time there was a sultry silence. The boy felt himself sweating, and could not see his grandfather. Suddenly it began to rain, at first desultorily, then thickly and with a great hissing sound.

"Grandfather! Grandfather!" He wept and ran at last be-

tween the man's dark knees. "Grandfather!" he whimpered.

There were sleepy grunts in reply.

"Wake up!" the little one whispered. "It's raining. I want to go home. Wake up!"

When the old man aroused himself it was to hear immense shaking rolls of thunder, the boy's voice in tears, and the rain throwing itself against the window in a sort of grey passion.

"I want to go home!" the boy cried. "It's night. Mamma'll have gone to bed."

"You be quiet," comforted the man. "It ain't night."

"Then what time is it?"

Like a white eye a watch came out in the gloom. Then a bluish match-flame spurted over it, and for a minute the boy, gazing silently at the leaf-shaped light and its reflections on his grandfather's face and the roof of the hut, momentarily forgot the storm and his fear.

"It's only eight o'clock," his grandfather growled. "You sit quiet."

But at that moment the flame seemed to be swallowed by the darkness and as if by some malicious miracle next moment to appear again in a frenzied light that gave the sky a yellow wound which in turn spilt yellow blood on the wood and the dark floor of the hut. There came thunder, as if a great beast sat roaring on the roof. The hot peaceable air seemed to cry out like a sensitive child. The trees were distressed, the great confusion made the boy's head thick and hot with terror.

He buried his head in the friendly cavern between the man's thighs and there groaned and wept in darkness.

And as the thunder and lightning made their terrifying duet above his head, he tried to think of his home, his mother's cool face, and the windows where there were blinds and harmless moths. But he managed it all vaguely, and felt that what prevented him was the storm, which was something black and cunning and old, and from which he had not a chance of escape. Only if he remained half-eaten up by the shadows and were mistaken for a dog or sack might he perhaps escape. And so he crouched there, very still, trying not

to listen, but hearing everything in a greater tumult than ever, and knew that the storm went on without heeding his fear.

Nearly an hour passed: often the boy wanted to cry out, but felt as if choked by fear and darkness and kept silent. His knees grew cold, and one leg fell into a tingling sleep. Only his head was warm and throbbed madly like an old clock. . . . Once there was a smell of burning from the wood, but it passed, and the boy forgot it in wondering if animals were terrified as he was, and where all the birds had gone, and why they were silent. . . . Then by some lucky chance he caught the silvery ticks of his grandfather's watch and was comforted.

So it grew quiet and a clear darkness came. The boy got up and opened his eyes. The rain no longer growled, and soon the thunder passed off. Outside the cobwebs hung like ropes of leaden beads, and the ground was covered with great shadow-printed pools over which the man lifted the boy. From the edge of the wood were visible the blue storms, retreated far off in a mist, and a star or two in the course they had used.

"There's the cuckoo!" the man said.

It was true, and as the boy listened he forgot the last of his fear. When he tried to walk he discovered his legs were stiff, and that when he set it down one foot tingled as if a thousand pins had been pressed into it, and he laughed.

For diversion the man told old stories, which the child heard vaguely, and when that grew stale, held the boy's forefinger in his own rugged palm and counted the stars.

"Fifty-one . . . fifty-two."

And though once or twice lightning flashed afar off there was no thunder. As the stars increased it seemed to the boy that the storm had lost all terror for him, that perhaps he had been asleep when the most terrible flashes came, and that soon the village would come, and from then onwards no fear.

"I'm not frightened, grandfather," he said, a dozen times.

Then, as it struck nine o'clock, and the boy listened to the notes roaming about the dark fields, he saw a star shoot.

"A star fell down! A star fell down!" he immediately cried. "Oh! golly!"

He was seized with joy, punched the man's legs, jumped into a pool, and cried again:—

"A star fell down!"

But his grandfather said nothing.

He did not thoroughly believe in the superstition that a falling star means death, but for some reason he could not help thinking of the connection between the two. As he went down the hill his mind became restive. Suddenly he thought of his wife, of her death, then of his own age, then of his stale limbs and the possibility of his dying before another day. Gradually it seemed he was doomed to die soon. He began to sweat, just as the boy had done, and was obsessed by the idea of something terrible and black waiting in readiness to crush the life from him, and against which there was no chance for body and soul. . . .

One or two birds began to chirp. The boy heard them, but like the man, thought only of the star. He remembered he must ask if animals were afraid, and where birds hid during the storm, but looking up into his grandfather's face saw it serious with shadows, and dared only say:—

"Did you see the star fall?"

There was no reply. As they walked down the hill the man became more and more stricken by the fear of death, and could not hold himself still. But the boy would only laugh, and, while watching for other stars to shoot, wonder with perplexity in his eyes why his grandfather looked stern and miserable, and, hurrying along as if it were going to rain again, never spoke to him.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What contrast does the story make?
2. What frightens the boy?
3. What frightens the grandfather?
4. In what respects is the story poetic?
5. In what respects is the story impressionistic?
6. What passages are most realistic?
7. Why does the author avoid naming the characters?

8. Which passengers show evidences of condensation?
9. Which person, the boy or the grandfather, is more justified in his fear?
10. What is the theme of the story?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"Fear" is an impressionistic presentation of a situation, a sketch rather than a fully developed story, but it has genuine power. In part the sketch is symbolic: all fear is equally valid or equally foolish; every person has his own foe whom he most fears, and all persons alike more or less resemble children in need of consolation. The suggestion of this theme, and the appropriate poetic style, give the sketch something of the effect of a poem.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, show contrasting attitudes on the part of two characters toward the expression of any emotion or mood. Make the contrast as great as possible, and show realistically that emotions of some kind affect every one.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. A farmer and a poet gaze at a river.
2. A boy and his sister look into a shop window.
3. A policeman and a kindly old woman talk about a beggar.
4. A boy and his father watch a military parade.
5. A parent takes a child to the circus.

"JUST IMAGINE . . ."*

By Elizabeth Bowen

Elizabeth Bowen is an English writer whose stories appear in such publications as the *Royal Magazine*, the *Spectator*, and the *London Mercury*. Two volumes of her stories, *Encounters* (1925) and *Ann Lee's and Other Stories* (1927), have been published in the United States.

NOEL and Nancy had a childhood in common, at Wimbledon, in the midst of the most frightful dangers and insecurity. Noel read too much and Nancy was too credulous; there came, successively, as their capacity for fear sophisticated, to be tigers under the back stairs, Indians down in the shrubbery that gathered together with tomahawks and crept out punctually at the approach of dusk, and, at last, a clammy-faced Thing on the top landing that reached out for them through the banisters as they went up. Imagination can build palaces too, and there were excursions into a high-pitched happiness, but these occurred less regularly and were less memorable. Nancy came from South America, where she had been born, Noel assured her, under some kind of a curse. "It mayn't get you here," he said comfortingly, "but if you ever go back . . ."

Nancy was a rather curd-faced child, with hair skinned back so tightly into a pig-tail that her eyes seemed stretched open wider than ever. She was prettily-mannered, slyish but deeply affectionate, and she loved Noel embarrassingly, with an attention to detail gratifying to his elderly parents. Her aunt and uncle had given Nancy a home; she had been asked over to be a companion to Noel and they played and did lessons together and later on were sent to a little day-

* From *Eve*. Copyright, 1927, by Elizabeth Bowen. Reprinted by special permission of Elizabeth Bowen.

school. Nancy was lazy and not clever at all; she cribbed whenever possible and kept what brains she had for the service of Noel. She was tactless yet deeply responsive; she interrupted Noel perpetually when he was reading and bored him so much by her tenderness and her habit of drinking him in that he could hardly be blamed for beginning to frighten her. Having begun he continued, and the more her terror reflected back on himself and was split into rays against the facets of his personality, the sharper his pleasure became. He was a fair, gentle, rather "unmanly" boy and was not ever tempted to twist her wrist round, kick her shins or tweak the heavy plait that walloped so teasingly between her shoulders. The absorbed companionship of Noel and Nancy, never romping together, never quarrelling, flitting round the garden and the comfortable sedate house, was a matter of self-congratulation and delight to the parents of Noel. When little Nancy cried at night, they would recount, as she sometimes did unreasonably and loudly, Noel would be the first to creep in to her and whisper into her ear something that made her curl up without a sound, draw up the sheets round her ears, and lie thus for the rest of the night, scarcely seeming to breathe, she was so still.

When she was sixteen Nancy did go back to South America, but long before this she and Noel had lost sight of one another. Noel was sent to a preparatory and Nancy to a school abroad; she spent her holidays with other relations because Noel was growing into quite a man now and could not be expected to play with girls any longer. When they did meet their interests were apart and they had little to say to each other; Nancy had left Wimbledon behind for ever. Yet for years Noel did not feel comfortable about the top landing and would make a detour after dark to avoid the shrubbery; the fears sloughed by Nancy's freer spirit still lay in wait for him.

News came from time to time of Nancy in the Argentine. While Noel was at Oxford his father died; later his mother sold the London house and moved to Kent. Noel, who had made up his mind to be an architect and was already articled

beautifully decorated and furnished a small flat and established himself in Bloomsbury. About this time he heard from his mother of Nancy's engagement. "An Englishman after all, I am relieved to hear, and so well off. It sounds ideal; dear little Nancy. Yet it seems like yesterday, doesn't it? One can hardly believe. . . . Do remember to write, Noel. And do try to think of some wedding present."

Noel put the letter down with a sense of distinct surprise that anybody should think of marrying his cousin Nancy. The child of nine had elongated in his imagination but not matured. He was in love himself in a pictorial, rather unprogressive way with a beautiful fair girl called Daphne. Noel had grown up into a whimsical vague young man, kindly disposed to the world in a general way but with a charming touch of the feline. He was noted for doing strange things by himself such as going alone to the Zoo; walking all night, or exploring the bus-routes of London. He was considered rare, and admired and loved as such by his friends in Bloomsbury. He was affectionate, naïve and a little lonely, and though most of the things he did were done for effect he often speculated as to the nature of true happiness. He did not think that he would ever be much of an architect.

A dutiful cousin, he spent some bewildered afternoons among prints and lacquer, and finally selected for Nancy the sort of present his Daphne would have appreciated and had sent it off. "Funny, skinny, little pop-eyed thing!" he said thoughtfully, sitting down to indite his congratulatory letter. He glanced towards Daphne's photograph for inspiration, bit his pen and had soon begun writing in his own inimitable way.

"Dear little Noel," wrote back Nancy—Really!—"Charming of you to write such a letter. Yes, isn't this absurd? I am quite *too* much in love with Ripon—whom you must certainly meet. I hope we shall be home for a bit in a year or two. Did you ever get a photograph I sent you two years ago? Perhaps you hated it, you passed it over in silence. I have improved since then; your Nancy is now rather beautiful. It would be absurd of me, wouldn't it, to contradict Ripon,

not to speak of various other authorities? I should love to know what you look like—as young as you sound? Twenty-three sounds an age, but as a matter of fact we are rather children, aren't we? I feel a babe beside Ripon and I glory in it. Ripon . . . " and so on for two or three pages more.

Noel destroyed the letter at once with a feeling of shame on Nancy's behalf and of outrage on his own. What had he done to incur it, this forced letter, impossible for the child he knew to have written?. In revulsion he felt pity for Nancy; whatever she'd grown into, she couldn't have grown into *this*. "Confidences . . ." thought Noel, "they're not *decent*. And anyway, they're over-sophisticated." He had a good many girl friends and thus a fairish standard for judging women. "Perhaps she's unhappy," he thought, and it cheered him wonderfully. "After all, a rich middle-aged Argentine, probably fat . . . Poor *child!*" He softened and felt some emotion. For Nancy was part of his childhood, that was what made her letter a sacrilege; she was woven in preciously among the Wimbledon memories with nightly terrors (delightful in retrospect) nursery firelight, his father's leather armchair, the smell of toast from the kitchen. Noel had never ceased to feel homesick; the feeling was increased with the disappearence of home. He leant his head on his arms a minute or two over the scraps of Nancy's letter and felt wretched. He thought of the nursery fire forever put out, and how one went on through the world growing colder and older.

For some time after he thought of Nancy now and again. She would reappear in his thoughts like a little ghost when he was melancholy; but when two years later he came home one night to find her telephone message, he had once more forgotten her. Affairs with Daphne had meanwhile come to a crisis; after an interval of distraction they had, he believed both unwillingly, become engaged. An uneasy, rather constrained feeling wore off or became familiar; he was in love with Daphne more than ever, quite intoxicated by being so much in love. He lived intensely but fluidly, futurelessly, in a kind of dream. When he picked up Nancy's telephone

message it was as though something snapped. Nancy and her husband were back in England; they had taken a flat in Knightsbridge. She asked him to come round and see her the next afternoon. Noel felt really angry at being thus interrupted; his instinct was to ring up, or better still write, and tell Nancy that this was impossible, would be impossible for weeks ahead. He wondered what she and Daphne would think of each other. Falling asleep, he became the prey of a dream that Daphne had married an Argentine and was keeping Nancy, a kind of unhappy monkey, shut up in a cage. He put a finger between the bars and Nancy bit him; this made him angry with Daphne who sat looking on ironically and coldly.

At half-past four Noel entered a lift, still doubtfully, was shot up a floor and shown through a chain of apartments into a drawing-room overhanging the Park. In an air blue and semi-opaque with cigarette smoke, and sharp with geranium scent, two clocks followed each other, a taffeta curtain rustled. A synthetic fire sent out a crimson pulse, beyond the window-draperies and clouded pane dusk crept like smoke from under the trees of the Park. A handsome Spanish woman, uncrossing her legs sprang up with an exclamation; dark, poised, imperious, she looked at him piercingly.

"Noel!" cried Nancy.

"My dear Nancy!" said Noel in a tone of expostulation, taking the hands held out to him. He felt deceived and a little angry, and still half believed he had come to the wrong flat. A pair of barbaric earrings swung from his cousin's small ears; they fascinated him by their glitter. Her cropped hair rippled against her head with a familiar smoothness. Supple and dark, independent of lines he knew, her frock said Paris.

"Aren't you *too* picturesque?" said Nancy, holding him at arm's length. "Aren't you lovely?" She had a deep voice and pronounced every syllable distinctly. Her dark, rather wild boy's eyes travelled over him. Noel glanced at himself in a mirror behind her shoulder to reassure himself that he *had* that indefinable something. Diffident, anxious to please,

he sat down in a black velvet chair and stared at the fire. "Awfully cute, these electric fires . . ." said Noel.

Nancy, taking him in, said nothing. She seemed unaware of a tension. "Now begin and tell me everything," said she, with most fearful directness.

This was not Noel's way. He began to look round the room obliquely but deliberately; he always began with a room. Nancy, as he had expected, did not speak his language at all; on the other hand everything he had prepared to say to her had rather lost point. He was used to converse in allusions, to what the other person had read, or had once said, or must obviously feel; he lived in an intimate circle, a clique, and too seldom emerged. He longed to talk speculatively about South America (without reference to Nancy) or epigrammatically about London (without reference to himself) or best of all, about clothes. He felt nervous, as though he were shut in a room with a panther.

Nancy offered him a cigarette of a kind he did not care for, and lighting one of her own in a long holder, leant sideways among her cushions. "So I hear you are engaged," said she. "You are fearfully happy?"

Noel nodded whimsically.

"I do so hope," Nancy said, maternally, "she's a really nice girl."

"Ra-ather a dear."

"What an extraordinary way to describe her," said Nancy with some contempt, and Noel felt furious with himself for not having done Daphne justice.

"As a matter of fact, she's so lovely one hardly likes to mention it."

Nancy turned up a lamp at her elbow, a lamp in a painted shade that cast arabesques and eyes over the wall. Leaning back she watched her smoke drift up to the ceiling. "Marriage," she said, "is wonderful." Her tone was Latin and sophisticated; very much a woman of the world's.

"My dear Nancy," Noel said, groaning, "Must we discuss marriage? It is so overdone."

"I'm a barbarian," smiled Nancy. "I don't know what's

overdone; I'm afraid I discuss what interests me. Marriage does. When shall I meet Daphne?"

"Mm," said Noel, "Mm, mm-mm."

"I know," said Nancy, "everyone in London's so full up. Well—" her voice changed, "I rather wish you hadn't got a Daphne. I'm so lonely. I do want somebody to talk to."

"My dear Nancy?"

"I'm not a bit happy, Noel," Nancy said, looking at him seriously and simply. She blinked and touched the corner of one eye, quite naïvely with the tip of a long finger as though there was a tear there.

Noel felt outraged. He looked at her incredulously for a moment, then got up and looked out of the window. He could not bear that sort of thing, it made him feel sick; Nancy would have to control herself. He clasped his hands behind his back nervously and said, after a wounding pause, "I'm sorry to hear that," with cold formality.

Nancy, getting up also, came and stood behind him, a hand on his shoulder. It was hard to realize that this hand, smooth, pointed and adorned with square-cut jewels, had been used to clutch him feverishly when a little girl was afraid in the dark. He had never done much to comfort Nancy. . . . It was as though this reflection transmitted itself, for Nancy said, half laughing, "You don't care. You always were cold-blooded, Noel. How you used to torture me!"

"Torture you?" said Noel. "How?"

"Fear," said Nancy. "I didn't mind pain. *'Just imagine'* you used to say; you had froggy hands and queer pale eyes. You seemed to *see* the things; my flesh crept, it did really; I was in a perpetual state of shivers."

Noel wheeled round on her, interested. "Really, Nancy, really?" he said eagerly. It made a great man of him all at once to have bullied this Nancy of the dark and brilliant smile. Nothing Daphne ever said had so moved him.

"Mmm," said Nancy; her eyes grew narrow with retrospect. "Weren't you a little devil?"

"Was I a devil?" mused Noel, hugging this.

"I can't think why I ever put up with it. I suppose I *had* to be fond of somebody even then. But I almost think I pity Daphne."

"But I don't ever—" he began and broke off, reminded too sharply that there had been lacking in his intercourse with Daphne just this subtle and secret pleasure.

Nancy's laughter was melancholy and indifferent. She threw herself down among her cushions again and brooded, the firelight crimson in her eyes. "You couldn't frighten me now," she said. "It's only myself I'm frightened of. I'm terribly passionate."

"Are you?" he said confusedly.

"You and your Daphne," said she with friendly contempt. "You're so smug, I expect it does you good to hold hands in the dark and tell each other ghost stories. . . . Wait till you've lived," she added, in a changed voice. "But you won't live—luckily for you."

"I bet," Noel said, stirred, angry and rather excited, "I could still frighten you."

She did not hear him. "You wait," she went on, "till you love someone—sickeningly. You won't till you don't trust them. You wait till you're hated and watched every hour of the day and hate and watch back again."

Noel thought they must all be very passionate out in the Argentine. He looked at Nancy with awe and a faint inferiority, and yet with tolerance, as though she belonged in the Zoo. "It's a good thing, at least," he said innocently, "that you feel all this about Ripon."

"But I don't," said Nancy, and turned on him her impatient dark eyes.

"O-oh," said Noel. "Didn't you once?"

"I wrote to you, didn't I?" Nancy said with a flicker of remembrance. "I suppose I didn't know then what I could feel. I suppose," she said to the fire, while her fingers unclenched themselves slowly along the arms of her chair, "one learns . . ."

They sat silently opposite one another in the smothered light. Her black figure melted into the black chair and Noel,

straining his eyes to distinguish her, felt that she and she only mattered, and mattered to him burningly. He was in a tumult for a moment or two, then this ebbed and left him with a cold and frightful feeling of insecurity. Fear! He was so afraid that he wanted to brandish something at Nancy, to shake her, or violently to kiss the pale cheek leaning in an attitude of abandon against her gold, preposterous cushions. The tick of the two clocks, never quite synchronising, pattering after each other, maddened him. Since the night fears of his childhood he had never felt so menaced.

"You've no business to talk like that," he said, cold with anger. "If you'll forgive my saying so, it rather shocks me. After all, however much we played as children, I am to all intents and purposes a stranger now, and I don't want to hear about your husband—it makes me feel quite sick. I needn't say how sorry I am that you're . . . not happy, but after all that must be between you and him. At least, over here we think so. Perhaps things may be different in the Argentine."

Nancy, turning her head slowly, looked at him from a long way away. "What a boy you are . . ."

He was silent, stung intolerably, and made a movement to go. She stretched out her two friendly hands to him. "Oh, stay! You dear Noel, you comfort me just by sitting there. You're like something in an English book, an old lady, a kettle or a cat. You don't know what a life I've led—you're like an afternoon at Wimbledon. . . ."

"Ah," said Noel, and looked at his cousin Nancy with dangerous eyes. "Are you quite sure I couldn't make you afraid again?"

"I wish you could . . ." said Nancy wistfully. She stirred and laughed in her chair. "Oh, Noel, do try . . ." A remote, inaccessible Spanish lady, veiled in tragic experience, was laughing at the young man from Bloomsbury. He almost prayed to be made cruel enough. "Very well," said Noel. "Look out!"

He put a hand in front of his eyes and began to grope back, back. The paths he had trod, were lonely as death,

clammy, forgotten but now once more his, familiar. He shut out the rich warm room, the stir and scent of Nancy, they fell away from him; Bloomsbury, life, hope, dreams, ambition and Daphne fell away from him too; he ran on alone to the edge of the Pit. Within him there was an absolute silence, a blank across which shadows doubtfully shivered and fled. Nancy laughed and turned out the lamp at her elbow, the room was dark except for the firelight and the lights coming up from the Park, silent except for the clocks and the rushing past of the cars. These sounds swelled up and filled the room, then died down, leaving it empty. From the forgotten source, deep in Noel, terror began to well up.

He knelt, half crouched, beside Nancy's chair, and, reaching out, caught her hand, smooth and firm, in his own, which was very cold. He felt her pulse jumping. Motionless as beneath some compulsion she waited, while his intense consciousness of her there beside him fought with his icy flood of overmastering fear. He had opened the floodgates for her, so he felt it right to press himself against the side of her chair and lean his head on her arm as they had done in childhood.

"Just imagine . . ." Noel whispered against her ear. Starting violently, he pointed into the dark. Her hand leapt in his, she laughed on an intake of breath as though she were stepping into cold water.

"We're not alone! Cover your face and don't look, my dear, for we're . . . we're Not Quite Alone . . . A-ah!— Oh, my God, IT'S *there* on the sofa . . . Don't be, don't be too much afraid; shall I tell you?— It's turning Its head . . . But It can't, Nancy. It can't possibly turn Its head . . . Because It—hasn't—got—a neck. No, not a neck. Only a . . . strip of skin. And that's, that's, that's,—ALL ROTTING AWAY."

Nancy, between a laugh and a shudder, as though cold water were rising round her, taunted "Go *on*, Noel . . ." She turned out the electric fire; they watched the red square fade and all that they could see of each other fade with it. Nancy made a movement, he clutched her in terror, afraid to be left. She got up, drew the heavy curtains across the

window and turned out the light in the vestibule so that not so much as a crack came in from under the door. So soft were her movements, so quiet her step, that he only guessed at her whereabouts and shrieked when, groping back to her chair, she put a hand on his face.

"*Noel!*" cried she, appalled by his moments of silence.

"Hush—I am listening. Listen too; do you hear? Some blood's dripping—tip, tap, tip, tap. Don't *move!* It's all over the floor. A-ach, it's all over my hands. It's all sticky and cold. *Cold* blood, Nancy . . . where shall I wipe it off? But you mustn't stir. It will hear. You forget: WE ARE NOT ALONE."

At this moment the sofa creaked, a cushion slid off and fell to the floor.

Noel, pressing his cheek against Nancy's arm, felt the muscles contract. A crack by the door and the sound of a heavy stirring answered the creak of the sofa. There began, interrupted by silences, the sound of something slithering, dragging itself along the wall.

"Noel!"

A shudder beside her.

"Noel, stop it now. It's too real, I can't bear it. Stop . . . You've won! Oh, STOP it!"

"But, my God," whispered Noel. "*I don't know what it is . . .*"

"What have you done?" Nancy laughed with horror. "There *is* something in here?"

"Yes . . ."

Noel felt he must crouch till he died in the silent blackness, counting the thuds of his heart. This horror had taken life from himself, had been born of his mind and was creeping about the room. When a fumbling began not far away and a hand seemed to be feeling its way towards them over the furniture, he reached out an arm for Nancy and held her against him. The delusion of life showed its falseness, of action, security, manly and womanly freedom from fear; they were plumbing together once more as in childhood the terrible deep. They were very close.

"Oh, fool," shivered Nancy. "Oh, fool; oh, you fool!" Her breath ran through his hair. "Be quiet," he cried, putting up a hand and crushing her lips to silence. A yard away, a chair slid forward softly over the parquet.

"Find the light!"

"Oh, I can't, I daren't put my hand out. Oh, Noel . . ."

Kneeling up, scarcely breathing, an arm still round Nancy, Noel felt along the back of her chair for the lamp at her other elbow. He touched the base of the lamp, heard it rattle, and his fingers crept up to the switch. At this moment a cold hand, shaking a little, closed on his own. "Now," thought Noel, "I am finished." Holding Nancy against him, his cheek against hers, he waited while the grip on his fingers, compelling them, wrenched round the switch.

. . . . . .

The light sprang up.

Very tall, going on up indefinitely towards the ceiling and spangled over with arabesques from the shade, the gray figure of Ripon loomed over them. With the revelation of his material presence his identity flashed upon Noel. A shoe was tucked beneath either of Ripon's armpits: Noel looked at his silver-grey huge feet planted squarely apart on the parquet.

"I thought I heard you in here," said Ripon. "Am I in the way?"

Nancy, pale and insolent, stared up with dilated eyes. "Is that the way one usually comes into one's drawing-room?" she asked in a voice over which she had not recovered control.

"Is this the way one usually entertains one's visitors?" asked Ripon, staring back.

Nancy shrugged, a gesture of disdain and helplessness. "A game," she said, "a favorite game of Noel's. This is Noel—Ripon—Noel."

Ripon turned, half bowed, and for the first time bent his dark, intent and heavy gaze on Noel. Noel's eyes, running agitatedly over that immense and too well-tailored person, focussed themselves under the chin, upon a flashing tie-pin. "Bounder!" he thought—the word was balm to him—"Rotten cad!"

"I'm afraid," he said at last, uneasily, "you'll think me pretty mad. We were playing ghosts; I frightened Nancy. I didn't know we had an audience. An audience generally . . . declares itself."

He glanced down and dusted the knees of his trousers: a gesture purely, for Ripon's parquet had been immaculate.

Then he realized that the big man was looking no longer at himself but back again at Nancy. He had been brushed clear of Ripon's thoughts like a fly. Ripon's eyes beneath his beetle brows had an uneasy, tortured look, like some large dog's whose trust in life has been destroyed. He was looking towards Nancy dubiously, bitterly, imploringly, asking for his cue. Nancy sat indifferent, a smile for both of them, stroking back her smooth hair against her head. A glance, a word from her, directed by an intention, could have made Ripon either break the young cousin to pieces, or else shake his hand, apologise to both of them, or even (inconceivable as the thing seemed) cringe. Deep-set in the impressive face, the eyes of Ripon held a torturing uncertainty. And Nancy, non-committal, smiled on, made no sign.

Shame-faced, Noel quickly turned away, and, until that terrible look ceased, could look at Ripon no more. There was an abyss here he could not fathom.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What peculiar childhood amusement fascinates Noel and Nancy?
2. What is the relation of the first paragraph to the plot of the story?
3. How do Noel and Nancy differ in character?
4. What changes does maturity bring to Noel and Nancy?
5. Does any common bond of sympathy unite Noel and Nancy in mature life?
6. What does the story gain through its inclusion of many years of time?
7. What is the effect of description throughout the story?
8. What passages foreshadow the climax of the story?
9. What does the author do to make the reader feel, increasingly, the weird power of the story?
10. How does the story affect the reader?

11. What does the story suggest concerning Nancy's South American life?
12. What is Nancy's purpose, as seen at the end of the story?
13. What events, not revealed by the author, follow the conclusion of the story?
14. How much of the story depends upon event, and how much upon character?
15. What relative space does the author give to preparation, background, atmosphere, and event?
16. What gives the story such striking power?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

" 'Just Imagine . . .' " is strikingly powerful, intensely suggestive, and so written that it leaves the reader, filled with the emotion of the situation, wondering what events will follow. The dramatic events are not wholly mechanical; in part they spring from the characters of the persons concerned. Therefore, what the reader thinks must follow the conclusion of the story depends upon his understanding of the three people, Noel, Nancy, and Ripon.

In weird power, in sheer ability to create emotional reactions in the reader, " 'Just Imagine . . .' " is superlative. Few stories evoke such full response. The reader unites with Noel and Nancy in feeling intense horror in face of the unknown danger that creeps through the darkened room. The author has so employed every device of foreshadowing and suggestion, and has thereby produced such powerful atmospheric effects, that the result is forcefully compelling.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, select a subject that will give full opportunity to awaken emotions of fear. By means of foreshadowing and suggestion, prepare the reader for an unusually powerful climax. Make action spring from character, and so plan the action that the reader will be left to draw his own conclusion concerning final results.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. A man explores a haunted house.
2. A schoolboy, on a dare, visits a cemetery at midnight.
3. A child walks alone at night along a dark road.
4. Two children, caught in a severe thunderstorm, take refuge in a long-deserted house in which a crime was once committed.
5. Owing to wholly unexpected circumstances, a young person is obliged to spend a night alone in the family residence.

GOLD-MOUNTED GUNS *

By F. R. Buckley

Frederic Robert Wakelin-Buckley, born in Ireland and educated in England and in France, is now living in the United States. Newspaper work and writing and acting for motion pictures have taken him to many parts of the country, and brought him into contact with various types of American life. He is an expert marksman with a revolver. Mr. Buckley is the author of numerous short stories, some of which have been collected in two volumes, and of several novels—*The Sage Hen, The Way of Sinners, Joan of the Ranch,* and *Billy Van.*

EVENING had fallen on Longhorn City, and already, to the south, an eager star was twinkling in the velvet sky, when a spare, hard-faced man slouched down the main street and selected a pony from the dozen hitched beside Tim Geogehan's general store. The town, which in the daytime suffered from an excess of eye-searing light in its open spaces, confined its efforts at artificial lighting to the one store, the one saloon, and its neighbor, the Temple of Chance: so it was from a dusky void that the hard-faced man heard himself called by name.

"Tommy!" a subdued voice accosted him.

The hard-faced man made, it seemed, a very slight movement—a mere flick of the hand at his low-slung belt: but it was a movement perfectly appraised by the man in the shadows.

"Wait a minute!" the voice pleaded.

A moment later, his hands upraised, his pony's bridle-reins caught in the crook of one arm, a young man moved into the zone of light that shone bravely out through Tim Geogehan's back window.

* From the *Red Book Magazine.* Reprinted by special permission of F. R. Buckley and the *Red Book Magazine.*

"Don't shoot," he said, trying to control his nervousness before the weapon unwaveringly trained on him. "I'm—a friend."

For perhaps fifteen seconds the newcomer and the hard-faced man examined each other with the unwinking scrutiny of those who take chances of life and death. The younger, with that lightning draw fresh in his mind, noted the sinister droop of a gray mustache over a hidden mouth, and shivered a little as his gaze met that of a pair of steel-blue eyes. The man with the gun saw before him a rather handsome face, marred, even in this moment of submission, by a certain desperation.

"What do you want?" he asked tersely.

"Can I put my hands down?" countered the other.

The lean man considered.

"All things bein' equal," he said, "I think I'd ruther you'd first tell me how you got round to callin' me Tommy. Been askin' people in the street?"

"No," said the boy. "I only got into town this afternoon, an' I ain't a fool, anyway. I seen you ride in this afternoon, and the way folks backed away from you made me wonder who you was. Then I seen them gold-mounted guns of yourn, an' of course I knew. Nobody ever had guns like them but Pecos Tommy. I could ha' shot you while you was gettin' your horse, if I'd been that way inclined."

The lean man bit his mustache.

"Put 'em down. What do you want?"

"I want to join you."

"You want to *what?*"

"Yeah, I know it sounds foolish to you, mebbe," said the young man. "But listen—your side-kicker's in jail down in Roswell. I figured I could take his place—anyway, till he got out. I know I ain't got any record, but I can ride, an' I can shoot the pips out of a ten-spot at ten paces, an'—I got a little job to bring into the firm, to start with."

The lean man's gaze narrowed.

"Have, eh?" he asked softly.

"It ain't anythin' like you go in for as a rule," said the boy apologetically, "but it's a roll of cash an'—I guess it'll show

you I'm straight. I only got on to it this afternoon. Kind of providential I should meet you right now."

The lean man chewed his mustache. His eyes did not shift.

"Yeah," he said slowly. "What you quittin' punchin' for?"

"Sick of it."

"Figurin' robbin' trains is easier money?"

"No," said the young man, "I ain't. But I like a little spice in life. They ain't none in punchin'."

"Got a girl?" asked the lean man.

The boy shook his head. The hard-faced man nodded reflectively.

"Well, what's the job?" he asked.

The light from Geogehan's window was cut off by the body of a man who, cupping his hands about his eyes, stared out into the night, as if to locate the buzz of voices at the back of the store.

"If you're goin' to take me on," said the young man, "I can tell you while we're ridin' toward it. If you ain't—why, there's no need to go no further."

The elder slipped back into its holster the gold-mounted gun he had drawn, glanced once at the obscured window, and again, piercingly, at the boy whose face now showed white in the light of the rising moon. Then he turned his pony and mounted.

"Come on," he commanded.

Five minutes later the two had passed the limits of the town, heading for the low range of hills which encircled it to the south—and Will Arblaster had given the details of his job to the unemotional man at his side.

"How do you know the old guy's got the money?" came a level question.

"I saw him come out of the bank this afternoon, grinnin' all over his face an' stuffin' it into his pants-pocket," said the boy. "An' when he was gone, I kind of inquired who he was. His name's Sanderson, an' he lives in this yer cabin right ahead a mile. Looked kind of a soft old geezer—kind that'd

give up without any trouble. Must ha' been quite some cash there, judgin' by the size of the roll. But I guess when *you* ask him for it, he won't mind lettin' it go."

"I ain't goin' to ask him," said the lean man. "This is your job."

The boy hesitated.

"Well, if I do it right," he asked, with a trace of tremor in his voice, "will you take me along with you sure?"

"Yeah—I'll take you along."

The two ponies rounded a shoulder of the hill: before the riders there loomed, in the moonlight, the dark shape of a cabin, its windows unlighted. The lean man chuckled.

"He's out."

Will Arblaster swung off his horse.

"Maybe," he said, "but likely the money ain't. He started off home, an' if he's had to go out again, likely he's hid the money some place. Folks know *you're* about. I'm goin' to see."

Stealthily he crept toward the house. The moon went behind a cloud-bank, and the darkness swallowed him. The lean man, sitting his horse, motionless, heard the rap of knuckles on the door—then a pause, the rattle of the latch. A moment later there came the heavy thud of a shoulder against wood—a cracking sound, and a crash as the door went down. The lean man's lips tightened. From within the cabin came the noise of one stumbling over furniture; then the fitful fire of a match illumined the windows. In the quiet, out there in the night, the man on the horse, twenty yards away, could hear the clumping of the other's boots on the rough board floor, and every rustle of the papers that he fumbled in his search. Another match scratched and sputtered, and then, with a hoarse cry of triumph, was flung down. Running feet padded across the short grass and Will Arblaster drew up, panting.

"Got it!" he gasped. "The old fool! Put it in a tea-canister right on the mantelshelf. Enough to choke a horse! Feel it!"

The lean man, unemotional as ever, reached down and took the roll of money.

"Got another match?" he asked.

Willie struck one, and panting, watched while his companion, moistening a thumb, ruffled through the bills.

"Fifty tens," said the lean man. "Five hundred dollars. Guess I'll carry it."

His cold blue eyes turned downward, and focused again with piercing attention on the younger man's upturned face. The bills were stowed in a pocket of the belt right next one of those gold-mounted guns which, earlier in the evening, had covered Willie Arblaster's heart. For a moment, the lean man's hand seemed to hesitate over its butt: then, as Willie smiled and nodded, it moved away. The match burned out.

"Let's get out of here," the younger urged; whereupon the hand which had hovered over the gun-butt grasped Will Arblaster's shoulder.

"No, not yet," he said quietly, "not just yet. Get on your hawss, an' set still awhile."

The young man mounted. "What's the idea?"

"Why!" said the level voice at his right. "This is a kind of novelty to me. Robbin' trains, you ain't got any chance to see results, like: this here's different. Figure this old guy'll be back pretty soon. I'd like to see what he does when he finds his wad's gone. Ought to be amusin'!"

Arblaster chuckled uncertainly.

"Ain't he liable to—"

"He can't see us," said the lean man with a certain new cheerfulness in his tone. "An' besides, he'll think we'd naturally be miles away; an' besides that, we're mounted, all ready."

"What's that?" whispered the young man, laying a hand on his companion's arm.

The other listened.

"Probably him," he said. "Now stay still."

There were two riders—by their voices, a man and a girl: they were laughing as they approached the rear of the house, where, roughly made of old boards, stood Pa Sanderson's substitute for a stable. They put up the horses; then their words

came clearer to the ears of the listeners, as they turned the corner of the building, walking toward the front door.

"I feel mean about it, anyhow," said the girl's voice. "You going on living here, Daddy, while—"

"Tut-tut-tut!" said the old man. "What's five hundred to me? I ain't never had that much in a lump, an' shouldn't know what to do with it if I had. 'Sides, your aunt Elviry didn't give it you for nothin'. 'If she wants to go to college,' says she, 'let her prove it by workin'. I'll pay half, but she's got to pay t'other half.' Well, you worked, an'— Where on earth did I put that key?"

There was a silence, broken by the grunts of the old man as he contorted himself in the search of his pockets: and then the girl spoke: the tone of her voice was the more terrible for the restraint she was putting on it.

"Daddy—the—the—did you leave the money in the house?"

"Yes. What is it?" cried the old man.

"Daddy—the door's broken down, and—"

There was a hoarse cry; boot-heels stumbled across the boards, and again a match flared. Its pale light showed a girl standing in the doorway of the cabin, her hands clasped on her bosom—while beyond the wreckage of the door a bent figure with silver hair tottered away from the mantelshelf. In one hand Pa Sanderson held the flickering match, in the other a tin box.

"Gone!" he cried in his cracked voice. "Gone!"

Willie Arblaster drew a breath through his teeth and moved uneasily in his saddle. Instantly a lean, strong hand, with a grip like steel, fell on his wrist and grasped it. The man behind the hand chuckled.

"Listen!" he said.

"Daddy—Daddy—don't take on so—please don't," came the girl's voice, itself trembling with repressed tears. There was a scrape of chair-legs on the floor as she forced the old man into his seat by the fireplace. He hunched there, his face in his hands, while she struck a match and laid the flame to the wick of the lamp on the table. As it burned up, she went

back to her father, knelt by him, and threw her arms about his neck.

"Now, now, now!" she pleaded. "Now, Daddy, it's all right. Don't take on so. It's all right."

But he would not be comforted.

"I can't replace it!" cried Pa Sanderson, dropping trembling hands from his face. "It's gone! Two years you've been away from me; two years you've slaved in a store; and now I've—"

"Hush, hush!" the girl begged. "Now, Daddy—it's all right. I can go on working, and—"

With a convulsive effort, the old man got to his feet. "Two years more slavery, while some skunk drinks your money, gambles it—throws it away!" he cried. "Curse him! Whoever it is, curse him! Where's God's justice? What's a man goin' to believe when years of scrapin' like your aunt done, an' years of slavin' like yours in Laredo there, an' all our happiness today can be wiped out by a damned thief in a minute?"

The girl put her little hand over her father's mouth.

"Don't, Daddy," she choked. "It only makes it worse. Come and lie down on your bed, and I'll make you some coffee. Don't cry, Daddy darling. Please."

Gently, like a mother with a little child, she led the heartbroken old man out of the watchers' line of vision, out of the circle of lamplight. More faintly, but still with heartrending distinctness, the listeners could hear the sounds of weeping.

The lean man sniffed, chuckled, and pulled his bridle.

"Some circus!" he said appreciatively. "C'mon, boy."

His horse moved a few paces, but Will Arblaster's did not. The lean man turned in his saddle.

"Ain't you comin'?" he asked.

For ten seconds, perhaps, the boy made no answer. Then he urged his pony forward until it stood side by side with his companion's.

"No," he said. "An'—an' I ain't goin' to take that money, neither."

"Huh?"

Courtesy of St. Nicholas Magazine.

"He urged his pony forward until it stood side by side with his companion's."

The voice was slow and meditative.

"Don't know as ever I figured what this game meant," he said. "Always seemed to me that all the hardships was on the stick-up man's side—gettin' shot at an' chased and so on. Kind of fun, at that. Never thought 'bout—old men cryin'.".

"That ain't my fault," said the lean man.

"No," said Will Arblaster, still very slowly. "But I'm goin' to take that money back. You didn't have no trouble gettin' it, so you don't lose nothin'."

"Suppose I say I won't let go of it?" suggested the lean man with a sneer.

"Then," snarled Arblaster, "I'll blow your damned head off an' take it! Don't you move, you! I've got you covered. I'll take the money out myself."

His revolver-muzzle under his companion's nose he snapped open the pocket of the belt and extracted the roll of bills. Then, regardless of a possible shot in the back, he swung off his horse and shambled, with the mincing gait of the born horseman, into the lighted doorway of the cabin. The lean man, unemotional as ever, sat perfectly still, looking alternately at the cloud-dappled sky, and at the cabin, from which now came a murmur of voices which seemed to harmonize, with a strange effect of joy, to the half-heard bass of the night-wind.

It was a full ten minutes before Will Arblaster reappeared in the doorway alone and made, while silhouetted against the light, a quick movement of his hand across his eyes, then stumbled forward through the darkness toward his horse. Still the lean man did not move.

"I'm—sorry," said the boy as he mounted. "But—"

"I ain't," said the lean man quietly. "What do you think I made you stay an' watch for, you young fool?"

The boy made no reply. Suddenly the hair prickled on the back of his neck and his jaw fell.

"Say," he demanded hoarsely at last. "Ain't you Pecos Tommy?"

The lean man's answer was a short laugh.

"But you got his guns, an' the people in Longhorn all kind

of fell back!'' the boy cried. ''If you ain't him, who are you?''

The moon had drifted from behind a cloud and flung a ray of light across the face of the lean man as he turned it, narrow-eyed, toward Arblaster. The pallid light picked out with terrible distinctness the grim lines of that face—emphasized the cluster of sun-wrinkles about the corners of the piercing eyes and marked as if with underscoring black lines the long sweep of the fighting jaw.

''Why,'' said the lean man dryly, ''I'm the sheriff that killed him yesterday. Let's be ridin' back.''

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What intimations of character does the author give in the first few pages?
2. How does the author indicate the setting?
3. How does the author emphasize dramatic values?
4. In what respects is there contrast between the boy and the hard-faced man?
5. What are the natural divisions of the story?
6. What values does the story gain through having the theft concern an old man and a young woman?
7. What strength of character appears in the boy? in the sheriff?
8. Point out evidences that show that the author carefully prepared the reader for the conclusion of the story.
9. What motives prompted the sheriff's actions? Point out various evidences of changing motives.
10. What became of the boy?
11. What is the author's purpose in telling the story?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

The character presentation in "Gold-mounted Guns" is quick, strong, and caricature-like in effect, and the emphasis on moral values is notable. Beside the fully developed self-assurance and self-control of the sheriff the author places the inexperience of the boy and his poorly planned effort to escape the monotony of ordinary life. The story suggests that when attention is focused on the wretched victims of crime, the seeming courage and romance of criminal activity appear utterly contemptible.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, show a person about to infringe upon the rights of others, confronted with a realization of the sorrow his wrong-doing may bring. In contrast with such a person,

present another who has unswerving strength of character. Make the ending of the story a surprise to the reader.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. A college student finds an opportunity to procure advance copies of an examination paper.
2. A pupil plans to falsify school records.
3. An employee plans a course of action that will lead to the discharge of another.
4. A bank officer prepares to abscónd with funds that belong to the bank.
5. A soldier intends to betray his cause to the enemy.

THE LOVE-LETTERS OF SMITH*

By H. C. Bunner

H. C. Bunner (Henry Cuyler Bunner, 1855–1896), wrote delightfully whimsical stories touched with laughter and tears. Behind every line he makes the reader feel his gentle and charming personality that looked at all the world in a kindly spirit.

From the age of twenty-two until his death at forty-one, Mr. Bunner was editor of *Puck*, a comic weekly to which he gave national circulation.

Because he thoroughly enjoyed telling of whims and oddities, little heroisms, near-tragedies, and strange freaks of fate, the busy editor took the time to write at least two novels, several plays, numerous short stories, and much charming poetry. One of his novels, *The Story of a New York House*, leaves a deep impression on every reader.

Those who enjoy the humorous, fantastic, and tender story that follows should read H. C. Bunner's collections of short stories: *Short Sixes* (1891), *More Short Sixes* (1894), *Zadoc Pine and Other Stories* (1891), *Made in France* (1893), *Love in Old Cloathes and Other Stories* (1896), and *Jersey Street and Jersey Lane* (1896).

Certainly in all of H. C. Bunner's work an intangible spirit makes the reader feel friendship for the man himself.

WHEN the little seamstress had climbed to her room in the story over the top story of the great brick tenement house in which she lived, she was quite tired out. If you do not understand what a story over a top story is, you must remember that there are no limits to human greed, and hardly any to the height of tenement houses. When the man who owned that seven-story tenement found that he could rent another floor, he found no difficulty in persuading the guardians of our building laws to let him clap another story on

* From *Short Sixes*, by H. C. Bunner, copyright, 1890, by Alice Larned Bunner. Reprinted by special permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

the roof, like a cabin on the deck of a ship; and in the south-easterly of the four apartments on this floor the little seamstress lived. You could just see the top of her window from the street—the huge cornice that had capped the original front, and that served as her window-sill now, quite hid all the lower part of the story on top of the top story.

The little seamstress was scarcely thirty years old, but she was such an old-fashioned little body in so many of her looks and ways that I had almost spelled her sempstress, after the fashion of our grandmothers. She had been a comely body, too; and would have been still, if she had not been thin and pale and anxious-eyed.

She was tired out to-night because she had been working hard all day for a lady who lived far up in the "New Wards" beyond Harlem River, and after the long journey home, she had to climb seven flights of tenement-house stairs. She was too tired, both in body and in mind, to cook the two little chops she had brought home. She would save them for breakfast, she thought. So she made herself a cup of tea on the miniature stove, and ate a slice of dry bread with it. It was too much trouble to make toast.

But after dinner she watered her flowers. She was never too tired for that; and the six pots of geraniums that caught the south sun on the top of the cornice did their best to repay her. Then she sat down in her rocking chair by the window and looked out. Her eyry was high above all the other buildings, and she could look across some low roofs opposite, and see the further end of Tompkins Square, with its sparse Spring green showing faintly through the dusk. The eternal roar of the city floated up to her and vaguely troubled her. She was a country girl, and although she had lived for ten years in New York, she had never grown used to that ceaseless murmur. To-night she felt the languor of the new season as well as the heaviness of physical exhaustion. She was almost too tired to go to bed.

She thought of the hard day done and the hard day to be begun after the night spent on the hard little bed. She thought of the peaceful days in the country, when she taught

school in the Massachusetts village where she was born. She thought of a hundred small slights that she had to bear from people better fed than bred. She thought of the sweet green fields that she rarely saw nowadays. She thought of the long journey forth and back that must begin and end her morrow's work, and she wondered if her employer would think to offer to pay her fare. Then she pulled herself together. She must think of more agreeable things, or she could not sleep. And as the only agreeable things she had to think about were her flowers, she looked at the garden on top of the cornice.

A peculiar gritting noise made her look down, and she saw a cylindrical object that glittered in the twilight, advancing in an irregular and uncertain manner toward her flower-pots. Looking closer, she saw that it was a pewter beer-mug, which somebody in the next apartment was pushing with a two-foot rule. On top of the beer-mug was a piece of paper, and on this paper was written, in a sprawling, half-formed hand:

porter
pleas excuse the libberty And
drink it

The seamstress started up in terror, and shut the window. She remembered that there was a man in the next apartment. She had seen him on the stairs, on Sundays. He seemed a grave, decent person; but—he must be drunk. She sat down on her bed, all a-tremble. Then she reasoned with herself. The man was drunk, that was all. He probably would not annoy her further. And if he did, she had only to retreat to Mrs. Mulvaney's apartment in the rear, and Mr. Mulvaney, who was a highly respectable man and worked in a boiler-shop, would protect her. So, being a poor woman who had already had occasion to excuse—and refuse—two or three "libberties" of like sort, she made up her mind to go to bed like a reasonable seamstress, and she did. She was rewarded, for when her light was out, she could see in the moonlight that the two-foot rule appeared again, with one joint bent back, hitched itself into the mughandle, and withdrew the mug.

The next day was a hard one for the little seamstress, and

she hardly thought of the affair of the night before until the same hour had come around again, and she sat once more by her window. Then she smiled at the remembrance. "Poor fellow," she said in her charitable heart, "I've no doubt he's *awfully* ashamed of it now. Perhaps he was never tipsy before. Perhaps he didn't know there was a lone woman in here to be frightened."

Just then she heard a gritting sound. She looked down. The pewter pot was in front of her, and the two-foot rule was slowly retiring. On the pot was a piece of paper, and on the paper was:

porter
good for the helth
it makes meet

This time the little seamstress shut her window with a bang of indignation. The color rose to her pale cheeks. She thought that she would go down to see the janitor at once. Then she remembered the seven flights of stairs; and she resolved to see the janitor in the morning. Then she went to bed and saw the mug drawn back just as it had been drawn back the night before.

The morning came, but, somehow, the seamstress did not care to complain to the janitor. She hated to make trouble—and the janitor might think—and—and—well, if the wretch did it again she would speak to him herself, and that would settle it.

And so, on the next night, which was a Thursday, the little seamstress sat down by her window, resolved to settle the matter. And she had not sat there long, rocking in the creaking little rocking-chair which she had brought with her from her old home, when the pewter pot hove in sight, with a piece of paper on the top.

This time the legend read:

Perhaps you are afrade i will
adress you
i am not that kind

The seamstress did not quite know whether to laugh or to cry. But she felt that the time had come for speech. She leaned out of her window and addressed the twilight heaven.

"Mr.—Mr.—sir—I—will you *please* put your head out of the window so that I can speak to you?"

The silence of the other room was undisturbed. The seamstress drew back, blushing. But before she could nerve herself for another attack, a piece of paper appeared on the end of the two-foot rule.

when i Say a thing i
mene it
i have Sed i would not
Adress you and i
Will not

What was the little seamstress to do? She stood by the window and thought hard about it. Should she complain to the janitor? But the creature was perfectly respectful. No doubt he meant to be kind. He certainly was kind, to waste these pots of porter on her. She remembered the last time—and the first—that she had drunk porter. It was at home, when she was a young girl, after she had had the diphtheria. She remembered how good it was, and how it had given her back her strength. And without one thought of what she was doing, she lifted the pot of porter and took one little reminiscent sip—two little reminiscent sips—and became aware of her utter fall and defeat. She blushed now as she had never blushed before, put the pot down, closed the window, and fled to her bed like a deer to the woods.

And when the porter arrived the next night, bearing the simple appeal:

Dont be afrade of it
drink it all

the little seamstress arose and grasped the pot firmly by the handle, and poured its contents over the earth around her largest geranium. She poured the contents out to the last drop,

and then she dropped the pot, and ran back and sat on her bed and cried, with her face hid in her hands.

"Now," she said to herself, "you've done it! And you're just as nasty and hard-hearted and suspicious and mean as—as pusley!"

And she wept to think of her hardness of heart. "He will never give me a chance to say I am sorry," she thought. And, really, she might have spoken kindly to the poor man, and told him that she was much obliged to him, but that he really mustn't ask her to drink porter with him.

"But it's all over and done now," she said to herself as she sat at her window on Saturday night. And then she looked at the cornice, and saw the faithful little pewter pot travelling slowly toward her.

She was conquered. This act of Christian forbearance was too much for her kindly spirit. She read the inscription on the paper:

porter is good for Flours
but better for Fokes

and she lifted the pot to her lips, which were not half so red as her cheeks, and took a good, hearty, grateful draught.

She sipped in thoughtful silence after this first plunge, and presently she was surprised to find the bottom of the pot in full view.

On the table at her side a few pearl buttons were screwed up in a bit of white paper. She untwisted the paper and smoothed it out, and wrote in a tremulous hand—she *could* write a very neat hand—

Thanks.

This she laid on the top of the pot, and in a moment the bent two-foot rule appeared and drew the mail-carriage home. Then she sat still, enjoying the warm glow of the porter, which seemed to have permeated her entire being with a heat that was not at all like the unpleasant and oppressive heat of the atmosphere, an atmosphere heavy with the Spring

damp. A gritting on the tin aroused her. A piece of paper lay under her eyes.

fine groing weather
Smith

it said.

Now it is unlikely that in the whole round and range of conversational commonplaces there was one other greeting that could have induced the seamstress to continue the exchange of communications. But this simple and homely phrase touched her country heart. What did *"groing weather"* matter to the toilers in this waste of brick and mortar? This stranger must be, like herself, a country-bred soul, longing for the new green and the upturned brown mould of the country fields. She took up the paper, and wrote under the first message:

Fine

But that seemed curt; *for* she added: *"for"* what? She did not know. At last in desperation she put down *potatoes.* The piece of paper was withdrawn and came back with an addition:

Too mist for potatoes.

And when the the little seamstress had read this, and grasped the fact that *m-i-s-t* represented the writer's pronunciation of "moist," she laughed softly to herself. A man whose mind, at such a time, was seriously bent upon potatoes, was not a man to be feared. She found a half-sheet of notepaper, and wrote:

I lived in a small village before I came to New York, but I am afraid I do not know much about farming. Are you a farmer?

The answer came:

have ben most Every thing
farmed a Spel in Maine
Smith

As she read this, the seamstress heard a church clock strike nine.

"Bless me, is it so late?" she cried, and she hurriedly penciled *Good Night*, thrust the paper out, and closed the window. But a few minutes later, passing by, she saw yet another bit of paper on the cornice, fluttering in the evening breeze. It said only *good nite*, and after a moment's hesitation, the little seamstress took it in and gave it shelter.

. . . . . .

After this, they were the best of friends. Every evening the pot appeared, and while the seamstress drank from it at her window, Mr. Smith drank from its twin at his; and notes were exchanged as rapidly as Mr. Smith's early education permitted. They told each other their histories, and Mr. Smith's was one of travel and variety, which he seemed to consider quite a matter of course. He had followed the sea, he had farmed, he had been a logger and a hunter in the Maine woods. Now he was foreman of an East River lumber yard, and he was prospering. In a year or two he would have enough laid by to go home to Bucksport and buy a share in a ship-building business. All this dribbled out in the course of a jerky but variegated correspondence, in which autobiographic details were mixed with reflections, moral and philosophical.

A few samples will give an idea of Mr. Smith's style:

i was one trip to van demens land

To which the seamstress replied:

It must have been very interesting.

But Mr. Smith disposed of this subject very briefly:

it wornt

Further he vouchsafed:

i seen a chinese cook in
hong kong could cook flapjacks
like your Mother

a mishnery that sells Rum
is the menest of Gods crechers

a bulfite is not what it is
cract up to Be

the dagos are wussen the
brutes

i am 6 1¾
but my Father was 6 *foot* 4

The seamstress had taught school one Winter and she could not refrain from making an attempt to reform Mr. Smith's orthography. One evening, in answer to this communication:

i killd a Bare in Maine 600
lbs waight

she wrote:

Isn't it generally spelled Bear?

but she gave up the attempt when he responded:

a bare is a mene animle any
way you spel him

The Spring wore on, and the Summer came, and still the evening drink and the evening correspondence brightened the close of each day for the little seamstress. And the draught of porter put her to sleep each night, giving her a calmer rest than she had ever known during her stay in the noisy city; and it began, moreover, to make a little "*meet*" for her. And then the thought that she was going to have an hour of pleasant companionship somehow gave her courage to cook and eat her little dinner, however tired she was. The seamstress's cheeks began to blossom with the June roses.

And all this time Mr. Smith kept his vow of silence unbroken, though the seamstress sometimes tempted him with little ejaculations and exclamations to which he might have responded. He was silent and invisible. Only the smoke of his pipe, and the clink of his mug as he set it down on the cornice, told her that a living, material Smith was her correspondent. They never met on the stairs, for their hours of coming and going did not coincide. Once or twice they passed each other in the street—but Mr. Smith looked straight ahead of him, about a foot over her head. The little seamstress thought he was a very fine-looking man, with his six feet one and three-quarters and his thick brown beard. Most people would have called him plain.

Once she spoke to him. She was coming home one Summer evening, and a gang of corner-loafers stopped her and demanded money to buy beer, as is their custom. Before she had time to be frightened, Mr. Smith appeared—whence, she knew not—scattered the gang like chaff, and, collaring two of the human hyenas, kicked them, with deliberate, ponderous, alternate kicks, until they writhed in ineffable agony. When he let them crawl away, she turned to him and thanked him warmly, looking very pretty now, with the color in her cheeks. But Mr. Smith answered no word. He stared over her head, grew red in the face, fidgeted nervously, but held his peace until his eyes fell on a rotund Teuton, passing by.

"Say, Dutchy!" he roared.

The German stood aghast.

"I ain't got nothing to write with!" thundered Mr. Smith, looking him in the eye. And then the man of his word passed on his way.

And so the Summer went on, and the two correspondents chatted silently from window to window, hid from sight of all the world below by the friendly cornice. And they looked out over the roof, and saw the green of Tompkins Square grow darker and dustier as the months went on.

Mr. Smith was given to Sunday trips into the suburbs, and he never came back without a bunch of daisies or black-eyed Susans or, later, asters or golden-rod for the little seam-

stress. Sometimes, with a sagacity rare in his sex, he brought her a whole plant, with fresh loam for potting.

He gave her also a reel in a bottle, which he wrote, he had "*maid*" himself, and some coral, and a dried flying-fish, that was somewhat fearful to look upon, with its sword-like fins and its hollow eyes. At first, she could not go to sleep with that flying-fish hanging on the wall.

But he surprised the little seamstress very much one cool September evening, when he shoved this letter along the cornice:

Respected and Honored Madam:

Having long and vainly sought an opportunity to convey to you the expression of my sentiments, I now avail myself of the privilege of epistolary communication to acquaint you with the fact that the Emotions, which you have raised in my breast, are those which should point to Connubial Love and Affection rather than to simple Friendship. In short, Madam, I have the Honor to approach you with a Proposal, the acceptance of which will fill me with ecstatic Gratitude, and enable me to extend to you those Protecting Cares, which the Matrimonial Bond makes at once the Duty and the Privilege of him, who would, at no distant date, lead to the Hymeneal Altar one whose charms and virtues should suffice to kindle its Flames, without extraneous Aid.

I remain, Dear Madam,
Your Humble Servant and
Ardent Adorer, F. Smith

The little seamstress gazed at this letter a long time. Perhaps she was wondering in what Ready Letter-Writer of the last century Mr. Smith had found his form. Perhaps she was amazed at the results of his first attempt at punctuation. Perhaps she was thinking of something else, for there were tears in her eyes and a smile on her small mouth.

But it must have been a long time, and Mr. Smith must have grown nervous, for presently another communication came along the line where the top of the cornice was worn smooth. It read:

If not understood will you mary me?

The little seamstress seized a piece of paper and wrote:

If I say Yes, will you speak to me?

Then she rose and passed it out to him, leaning out of the window, and their faces met.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What sort of story does the title lead the reader to expect?
2. What does the unusual setting tell concerning the characters of the story?
3. Explain how the details of the story aid in awakening emotions.
4. In what respects is the plot unique?
5. Point out the principal steps in the development of the story.
6. What reveals the character of the seamstress?
7. What reveals the character of her neighbor?
8. What facts draw the two characters together?
9. What makes the story humorous?
10. What makes the story somewhat pathetic?
11. Explain how the story is based upon goodness.
12. How does the author lead us to admire the seamstress?
13. How does the author lead us to admire Smith?
14. Explain how Smith wrote his letter of proposal.
15. In what spirit does the story leave the reader?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

What are the materials that H. C. Bunner used in order to create his charmingly humorous story, "The Love-Letters of Smith"? The char-

acters are two quite ordinary people, in the commonplace setting of a tenement-house. Each person is making a brave struggle to succeed in life, and each is equally determined to live a good life. One of them, in expressing his sympathy and his desire to help the other, who seems on the verge of physical and nervous breakdown, follows a laughably clumsy but distinctly honorable method. The deeper notes of the story are struck by its emphasis on the need of human fellowship, on the necessity of maintaining honor under all conditions, and on the value of real manliness, even when surface culture is lacking.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, select two people from the commonplace life around you, preferably students, two boys, or two girls, or a boy or a girl and a father or a mother. In fact, make any combination of characters that you please, except a man and a woman in a tenement-house. Show your two characters living unimportant lives in their particular place, whatever that may be, school or college or home or office. Then show one of them doing some odd, unexpected, whimsical act out of pure generosity and genuine goodness of heart. Be original in inventing this action or series of actions. Don't let it have anything to do with writing notes, or pushing anything from one window to another. In conclusion, show that real sympathy or affection wins recognition.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. An odd little boy, or girl, brings the teacher strange presents.
2. Two small boys, or girls, part with their most prized possessions.
3. A good-hearted junk-man brings his wife peculiar treasures.
4. An old beggar expresses thanks by performing strange services.
5. A very old man, or woman, gives away what has been kept for a lifetime, something ridiculous in itself but rich in sentimental value.

MR. TRAVERS'S FIRST HUNT *

By Richard Harding Davis

Richard Harding Davis (1864–1916), perhaps the most noted of all American war-correspondents, and certainly one of the most noted of short-story writers, was born in Philadelphia and educated at Lehigh and Johns Hopkins Universities. In 1886 he became a newspaper reporter. From 1897 until his death there was no important war in any part of the world the battles of which he did not witness. His newspaper work took him into many lands, including the jungles of the Congo. In the same years he found opportunity to write numerous short stories and many novels, all of which command high respect. He was an intensely virile, active man, noble in his emotions and gifted with great artistic skill as a writer. Among his best works are the following: *Gallegher and Other Stories* (1891), *Van Bibber and Others* (1892), *Episodes from Van Bibber's Life* (1899), *Soldiers of Fortune* (1897), *Captain Macklin* (1902), *Vera, the Medium* (1908), *The Bar Sinister* (1904).

YOUNG Travers, who had been engaged to a girl down on Long Island for the last three months, only met her father and brother a few weeks before the day set for the wedding. The brother is a master of hounds near Southampton, and shared the expense of importing a pack from England with Van Bibber. The father and son talked horse all day and until one in the morning; for they owned fast thoroughbreds, and entered them at the Sheepshead Bay and other race-tracks. Old Mr. Paddock, the father of the girl to whom Travers was engaged, had often said that when a young man asked him for his daughter's hand he would ask him in return, not if he had lived straight, but if he could ride straight. And on his answering this question in

* From *Van Bibber and Others*, by Richard Harding Davis, copyright, 1892, by Harper & Brothers. Reprinted by special permission of Harper & Brothers.

the affirmative depended his gaining her parent's consent. Travers had met Miss Paddock and her mother in Europe, while the men of the family were at home. He was invited to their place in the fall when the hunting season opened, and spent the evening most pleasantly and satisfactorily with his *fiancée* in a corner of the drawing-room. But as soon as the woman had gone, young Paddock joined him and said, "You ride, of course?" Travers had never ridden; but he had been prompted how to answer by Miss Paddock, and so said there was nothing he liked better. As he expressed it, he would rather ride than sleep.

"That's good," said Paddock. "I'll give you a mount on Satan to-morrow morning at the meet. He is a bit nasty at the start of the season; and ever since he killed Wallis, the second groom, last year, none of us care much to ride him. But you can manage him, no doubt. He'll just carry your weight."

Mr. Travers dreamed that night of taking large, desperate leaps into space on a wild horse that snorted forth flames, and that rose at solid stone walls as though they were hay-ricks.

He was tempted to say he was ill in the morning—which was, considering his state of mind, more or less true—but concluded that, as he would have to ride sooner or later during his visit, and that if he did break his neck it would be in a good cause, he determined to do his best. He did not want to ride at all, for two excellent reasons—first, because he wanted to live for Miss Paddock's sake, and, second, because he wanted to live for his own.

The next morning was a most forbidding and doleful-looking morning, and young Travers had great hopes that the meet would be declared off; but just as he lay in doubt, the servant knocked at his door with his riding things and his hot water.

He came down-stairs looking very miserable indeed. Satan had been taken to the place where they were to meet, and Travers viewed him on his arrival there with a sickening

Courtesy of Bernard Weatherill, Inc.

"The hounds were well ahead."

sense of fear, as he saw him pulling three grooms off their feet.

Travers decided that he would stay with his feet on solid earth just as long as he could, and when the hounds were thrown off and the rest had started at a gallop he waited, under the pretense of adjusting his gaiters, until they were all well away. Then he clinched his teeth, crammed his hat down over his ears, and scrambled up on to the saddle. His feet fell quite by accident into the stirrups, and the next instant he was off after the others, with an indistinct feeling that he was on a locomotive that was jumping the ties. Satan was in among and had passed the other horses in less than five minutes, and was so close on the hounds that the whippers-in gave a cry of warning. But Travers could as soon have pulled a boat back from going over the Niagara Falls as Satan, and it was only because the hounds were well ahead that saved them from having Satan ride them down. Travers had taken hold of the saddle with his left hand to keep himself down, and sawed and swayed on the reins with his right. He shut his eyes whenever Satan jumped, and never knew how he happened to stick on; but he did stick on, and was so far ahead that no one could see in the misty morning just how badly he rode. As it was, for daring and speed he led the field, and not even young Paddock was near him from the start. There was a broad stream in front of him, and a hill just on its other side. No one had ever tried to take this at a jump. It was considered more of a swim than anything else, and the hunters always crossed it by the bridge, toward the left. Travers saw the bridge and tried to jerk Satan's head in that direction; but Satan kept right on as straight as an express train over the prairie. Fences and trees and furrows passed by and under Travers like a panorama run by electricity, and he only breathed by accident. They went on at the stream and the hill beyond as though they were riding at a stretch of turf, and, though the whole field set up a shout of warning and dismay, Travers could only gasp and shut his eyes. He remembered the fate of the second groom and

shivered. Then the horse rose like a rocket lifting Travers so high in the air that he thought Satan would never come down again; but he did come down with his feet bunched, on the opposite side of the stream. The next instant he was up and over the hill, and had stopped panting in the very centre of the pack that were snarling and snapping around the fox. And then Travers showed that he was a thoroughbred, even though he could not ride, for he hastily fumbled for his cigar-case, and when the field came pounding up over the bridge and around the hill, they saw him seated nonchalantly on his saddle, puffing critically at a cigar and giving Satan patronizing pats on the head.

"My dear girl," said old Mr. Paddock to his daughter as they rode back, "if you love that young man of yours and want to keep him, make him promise to give up riding. A more reckless and more brilliant horseman I have never seen. He took that double jump at the gate and that stream like a centaur. But he will break his neck sooner or later, and he ought to be stopped." Young Paddock was so delighted with his prospective brother-in-law's great riding that that night in the smoking-room he made him a present of Satan before all the men.

"No," said Travers, gloomily, "I can't take him. Your sister has asked me to give up what is dearer to me than anything next to herself, and that is my riding. You see, she is absurdly anxious for my safety, and she has asked me to promise never to ride again, and I have given my word."

A chorus of sympathetic remonstrance rose from the men.

"Yes, I know," said Travers to her brother, "it is rough, but it just shows what sacrifices a man will make for the woman he loves."

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What is the importance of the first paragraph in relation to the rest of the story?
2. What gives naturalness to Travers's silence concerning his horsemanship?
3. By what means does the author emphasize the risks Travers took?

4. How does the author explain the fact that expert horsemen did not notice Travers's poor horsemanship?
5. How does the author emphasize the various incidents in Travers's mad ride?
6. Make an analysis of Travers's character.
7. What makes the conclusion of the story laughable?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"Mr. Travers's First Hunt" is founded upon two situations: one, a man's appearing to do something remarkably well, when, as a matter of fact, he is wholly inexpert in that particular accomplishment; two, upon the same man's ability to avoid disclosing his ignorance. First, the author emphasizes the unusual interests of a group of characters, showing that their every thought centers on one accomplishment. Second, he places his central character under the necessity of doing remarkably well that in which his hosts excel. Third, he shows, the steps by which his hero wins high praise. Last of all, he extricates the hero from the danger of having to repeat his exhibition of skill at any time in the future.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, think of some person, or group of persons, deeply interested in one ability. Then show your hero suddenly put under the stress of having to do something of which he really knows next to nothing. Then, in a series of incidents, show him apparently succeeding far better than the average skilled person could do. End by suggesting some strong reason that will prevent your hero's falling into similar danger in the future.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. A weak student who knows practically nothing of a foreign language is put under the necessity of interpreting or translating, and appears to be a master.
2. A timid person who knows nothing about canoeing is by accident carried in a canoe down a series of dangerous rapids, and gains reputation as a daring paddler.
3. A person unaccustomed to firearms visits a rifle-range, pretends to shoot, and by accident discharges the gun, hitting a distant or a difficult target, and appears to the onlookers to be a remarkable sharpshooter.
4. By sheer accident a young person captures a desperate burglar, and gains a great reputation for heroism.
5. A young person is led by force of circumstances to slide down a most dangerous slope on skis, thereby gaining distinction.

THE GREEK INTERPRETER*

By A. Conan Doyle

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, especially noted for his stories of Sherlock Holmes, but also worthy of high praise as a writer of historical novels, was born in England in 1859, and educated in England, in Germany, and in Scotland at the University of Edinburgh. In 1885 he received the degree of Doctor of Medicine, and at once began active medical practice. At about the same time he began the writing of his series of notable books. In his detective stories he followed the example set by Edgar Allan Poe, showing the power of deductive reasoning based upon close and accurate observation. In his historical novels he kept close to the facts of history, so illuminating those facts with personal and romantic interest that the reader seems to live in past periods. In 1902, because of his remarkable literary achievements, he received the honor of knighthood. Among his best works are the following: *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), *Micah Clarke* (1888), *The Sign of the Four* (1889), *The White Company* (1891), *Rodney Stone* (1896), *The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard* (1896), *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1891), *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (1893), *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902), *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (1905).

DURING my long and intimate acquaintance with Mr. Sherlock Holmes I had never heard him refer to his relations, and hardly ever to his own early life. This reticence upon his part had increased the somewhat inhuman effect which he produced upon me, until sometimes I found myself regarding him as an isolated phenomenon, a brain without a heart, as deficient in human sympathy as he was pre-eminent in intelligence. His aversion to women and his disinclination to form new friendships were both typical of his unemotional character, but not more so than his complete suppression of

* From *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, by A. Conan Doyle, copyright, 1893, 1922, by A. Conan Doyle. Copyright, 1894, by Harper & Brothers. Reprinted by special permission of Harper & Brothers.

every reference to his own people. I had come to believe that he was an orphan with no relatives living; but one day, to my very great surprise, he began to talk to me about his brother.

It was after tea on a summer evening, and the conversation, which had roamed in a desultory, spasmodic fashion from golf clubs to the causes of the change in the obliquity of the ecliptic, came round at last to the question of atavism and hereditary aptitudes. The point under discussion was, how far any singular gift in an individual was due to his ancestry and how far to his own early training.

"In your own case," said I, "from all that you have told me, it seems obvious that your faculty of observation and your peculiar facility for deduction are due to your own systematic training."

"To some extent," he answered, thoughtfully. "My ancestors were country squires, who appear to have led much the same life as is natural to their class. But, none the less, my turn that way is in my veins, and may have come with my grandmother, who was the sister of Vernet, the French artist. Art in the blood is liable to take the strangest forms."

"But how do you know that it is hereditary?"

"Because my brother Mycroft possesses it in a larger degree than I do."

This was news to me indeed. If there were another man with such singular powers in England, how was it that neither police nor public had heard of him? I put the question, with a hint that it was my companion's modesty which made him acknowledge his brother as his superior. Holmes laughed at my suggestion.

"My dear Watson," said he, "I cannot agree with those who rank modesty among the virtues. To the logician all things should be seen exactly as they are, and to underestimate one's self is as much a departure from truth as to exaggerate one's own powers. When I say, therefore, that Mycroft has better powers of observation than I, you may take it that I am speaking the exact and literal truth."

"Is he your junior?"

"Seven years my senior."

"How comes it that he is unknown?"

"Oh, he is very well known in his own circle."

"Where, then?"

"Well, in the Diogenes Club, for example."

I had never heard of the institution, and my face must have proclaimed as much, for Sherlock Holmes pulled out his watch.

"The Diogenes Club is the queerest club in London, and Mycroft one of the queerest men. He's always there from quarter to five to twenty to eight. It's six now, so if you care for a stroll this beautiful evening I shall be very happy to introduce you to two curiosities."

Five minutes later we were in the street, walking towards Regent's Circus.

"You wonder," said my companion, "why it is that Mycroft does not use his powers for detective work. He is incapable of it."

"But I thought you said—"

"I said that he was my superior in observation and deduction. If the art of the detective began and ended in reasoning from an arm-chair, my brother would be the greatest criminal agent that ever lived. But he has no ambition and no energy. He will not even go out of his way to verify his own solutions, and would rather be considered wrong than take the trouble to prove himself right. Again and again I have taken a problem to him, and have received an explanation which has afterwards proved to be the correct one. And yet he was absolutely incapable of working out the practical points which must be gone into before a case could be laid before a judge or jury."

"It is not his profession, then?"

"By no means. What is to me a means of livelihood is to him the merest hobby of a dilettante. He has an extraordinary faculty for figures, and audits the books in some of the government departments. Mycroft lodges in Pall Mall, and he walks round the corner into Whitehall every morning and back every evening. From year's end to year's end he takes

no other exercise, and is seen nowhere else, except only in the Diogenes Club, which is just opposite his rooms."

"I cannot recall the name."

"Very likely not. There are many men in London, you know, who, some from shyness, some from misanthropy, have no wish for the company of their fellows. Yet they are not averse to comfortable chairs and the latest periodicals. It is for the convenience of these that the Diogenes Club was started, and it now contains the most unsociable and unclubable men in town. No member is permitted to take the least notice of any other one. Save in the Stranger's Room, no talking is, under any circumstances, allowed, and three offences, if brought to the notice of the committee, render the talker liable to expulsion. My brother was one of the founders, and I have myself found it a very soothing atmosphere."

We had reached Pall Mall as we talked, and were walking down it from the St. James's end. Sherlock Holmes stopped at a door some little distance from the Carlton, and, cautioning me not to speak, he led the way into the hall. Through the glass panelling I caught a glimpse of a large and luxurious room, in which a considerable number of men were sitting about and reading papers, each in his own little nook. Holmes showed me into a small chamber which looked out into Pall Mall, and then, leaving me for a minute, he came back with a companion who I knew could only be his brother.

Mycroft Holmes was a much larger and stouter man than Sherlock. His body was absolutely corpulent, but his face, though massive, had preserved something of the sharpness of expression which was so remarkable in that of his brother. His eyes, which were of a peculiarly light, watery gray, seemed to always retain that far-away introspective look which I had only observed in Sherlock's when he was exerting his full powers.

"I am glad to meet you, sir," said he, putting out a broad, fat hand like the flipper of a seal. "I hear of Sherlock everywhere since you became his chronicler. By the way, Sherlock, I expected to see you round last week, to consult me over

that Manor House case. I thought you might be a little out of your depth."

"No, I solved it," said my friend, smiling.

"It was Adams, of course."

"Yes, it was Adams."

"I was sure of it from the first." The two sat down together in the bow-window of the club. "To any one who wishes to study mankind this is the spot," said Mycroft. "Look at the magnificent types! Look at these two men who are coming towards us, for example."

"The billiard-marker and the other?"

"Precisely. What do you make of the other?"

The two men had stopped opposite the window. Some chalk marks over the waistcoat pocket were the only signs of billiards which I could see in one of them. The other was a very small, dark fellow, with his hat pushed back and several packages under his arm.

"An old soldier, I perceive," said Sherlock.

"And very recently discharged," remarked the brother.

"Served in India, I see."

"And a non-commissioned officer."

"Royal Artillery, I fancy," said Sherlock.

"And a widower."

"But with a child."

"Children, my dear boy, children."

"Come," said I, laughing, "this is a little too much."

"Surely," answered Holmes, "it is not hard to say that a man with that bearing, expression of authority, and sunbaked skin, is a soldier, is more than a private, and is not long from India."

"That he has not left the service long is shown by his still wearing his ammunition boots, as they are called," observed Mycroft.

"He had not the cavalry stride, yet he wore his hat on one side, as is shown by the lighter skin on that side of his brow. His weight is against his being a sapper. He is in the artillery."

"Then, of course, his complete mourning shows that he has

lost some one very dear. The fact that he is doing his own shopping looks as though it were his wife. He has been buying things for children, you perceive. There is a rattle, which shows that one of them is very young. The wife probably died in childbed. The fact that he has a picture-book under his arm shows that there is another child to be thought of.''

I began to understand what my friend meant when he said that his brother possessed even keener faculties than he did himself. He glanced across at me and smiled. Mycroft took snuff from a tortoise-shell box, and brushed away the wandering grains from his coat front with a large, red silk handkerchief.

''By the way, Sherlock,'' said he, ''I have had something quite after your own heart—a most singular problem—submitted to my judgment. I really had not the energy to follow it up save in a very incomplete fashion, but it gave me a basis for some pleasing speculations. If you would care to hear the facts—''

''My dear Mycroft, I should be delighted.''

The brother scribbled a note upon a leaf of his pocket-book, and, ringing the bell, he handed it to the waiter.

''I have asked Mr. Melas to step across,'' said he. ''He lodges on the floor above me, and I have some slight acquaintance with him, which led him to come to me in his perplexity. Mr. Melas is a Greek by extraction, as I understand, and he is a remarkable linguist. He earns his living partly as interpreter in the law courts and partly by acting as guide to any wealthy Orientals who may visit the Northumberland Avenue hotels. I think I will leave him to tell his very remarkable experience in his own fashion.''

A few minutes later we were joined by a short, stout man whose olive face and coal black hair proclaimed his southern origin, though his speech was that of an educated Englishman. He shook hands eagerly with Sherlock Holmes, and his dark eyes sparkled with pleasure when he understood that the specialist was anxious to hear his story.

''I do not believe that the police credit me—on my word, I do not,'' said he in a wailing voice. ''Just because they have

never heard of it before, they think that such a thing cannot be. But I know that I shall never be easy in my mind until I know what has become of my poor man with the sticking-plaster upon his face."

"I am all attention," said Sherlock Holmes.

"This is Wednesday evening," said Mr. Melas. "Well then, it was Monday night—only two days ago, you understand—that all this happened. I am an interpreter, as perhaps my neighbor there has told you. I interpret all languages—or nearly all—but as I am a Greek by birth and with a Grecian name, it is with that particular tongue that I am principally associated. For many years I have been the chief Greek interpreter in London, and my name is very well known in the hotels.

"It happens not unfrequently that I am sent for at strange hours by foreigners who get into difficulties, or by travellers who arrive late and wish my services. I was not surprised, therefore, on Monday night when a Mr. Latimer, a very fashionably dressed young man, came up to my rooms and asked me to accompany him in a cab which was waiting at the door. A Greek friend had come to see him upon business, he said, and as he could speak nothing but his own tongue, the services of an interpreter were indispensable. He gave me to understand that his house was some little distance off, in Kensington, and he seemed to be in a great hurry, bustling me rapidly into the cab when we had descended to the street.

"I say into the cab, but I soon became doubtful as to whether it was not a carriage in which I found myself. It was certainly more roomy than the ordinary four-wheeled disgrace to London, and the fittings, though frayed, were of rich quality. Mr. Latimer seated himself opposite to me and we started off through Charing Cross and up the Shaftesbuy Avenue. We had come out upon Oxford Street and I had ventured some remark as to this being a roundabout way to Kensington, when my words were arrested by the extraordinary conduct of my companion.

"He began by drawing a most formidable-looking bludgeon loaded with lead from his pocket, and switching it back-

ward and forward several times, as if to test its weight and strength. Then he placed it without a word upon the seat beside him. Having done this, he drew up the windows on each side, and I found to my astonishment that they were covered with paper so as to prevent my seeing through them.

"'I am sorry to cut off your view, Mr. Melas,' said he. 'The fact is that I have no intention that you should see what the place is to which we are driving. It might possibly be inconvenient to me if you could find your way there again.'

"As you can imagine, I was utterly taken aback by such an address. My companion was a powerful, broad-shouldered young fellow, and, apart from the weapon, I should not have had the slightest chance in a struggle with him.

"'This is very extraordinary conduct, Mr. Latimer,' I stammered. 'You must be aware that what you are doing is quite illegal.'

"'It is somewhat of a liberty, no doubt,' said he, 'but we'll make it up to you. I must warn you, however, Mr. Melas, that if at any time to-night you attempt to raise an alarm or do anything which is against my interests, you will find it a very serious thing. I beg you to remember that no one knows where you are, and that, whether you are in this carriage or in my house, you are equally in my power.'

"His words were quiet, but he had a rasping way of saying them which was very menacing. I sat in silence, wondering what on earth could be his reason for kidnapping me in this extraordinary fashion. Whatever it might be, it was perfectly clear that there was no possible use in my resisting, and that I could only wait to see what might befall.

"For nearly two hours we drove without my having the least clue as to where we were going. Sometimes the rattle of the stones told of a paved causeway, and at others our smooth, silent course suggested asphalt; but, save by this variation in sound, there was nothing at all which could in the remotest way help me to form a guess as to where we were. The paper over each window was impenetrable to light, and a blue curtain was drawn across the glass work in front. It was a quarter-past seven when we left Pall Mall, and my watch showed

me that it was ten minutes to nine when we at last came to a standstill. My companion let down the window, and I caught a glimpse of a low, arched doorway with a lamp burning above it. As I was hurried from the carriage it swung open, and I found myself inside the house, with a vague impression of a lawn and trees on each side of me as I entered. Whether these were private grounds, however, or *bona-fide* country was more than I could possibly venture to say.

"There was a colored gas-lamp inside which was turned so low that I could see little save that the hall was of some size and hung with pictures. In the dim light I could make out that the person who had opened the door was a small, mean-looking, middle-aged man with rounded shoulders. As he turned towards us the glint of the light showed me that he was wearing glasses.

" 'Is this Mr. Melas, Harold?' said he.

" 'Yes.'

" 'Well done, well done! No ill will, Mr. Melas, I hope, but we could not get on without you. If you deal fair with us you'll not regret it, but if you try any tricks, God help you!' He spoke in a nervous, jerky fashion, and with little giggling laughs in between, but somehow he impressed me with fear more than the other.

" 'What do you want with me?' I asked.

" 'Only to ask a few questions of a Greek gentleman who is visiting us, and to let us have the answers. But say no more than you are told to say, or—' here came the nervous giggle again—'you had better never have been born.'

"As he spoke he opened a door and showed the way into a room which appeared to be very richly furnished, but again the only light was afforded by a single lamp half-turned down. The chamber was certainly large, and the way in which my feet sank into the carpet as I stepped across it told me of its richness. I caught glimpses of velvet chairs, a high white marble mantelpiece, and what seemed to be a suit of Japanese armor at one side of it. There was a chair just under the lamp, and the elderly man motioned that I should sit in it. The younger had left us, but he suddenly returned through another

door, leading with him a gentleman clad in some sort of loose dressing-gown who moved slowly towards us. As he came into the circle of dim light which enabled me to see him more clearly I was thrilled with horror at his appearance. He was deadly pale and terribly emaciated, with the protruding, brilliant eyes of a man whose spirit was greater than his strength. But what shocked me more than any signs of physical weakness was that his face was grotesquely criss-crossed with sticking-plaster, and that one large pad of it was fastened over his mouth.

"'Have you the slate, Harold?' cried the older man, as this strange being fell rather than sat down into a chair. 'Are his hands loose? Now, then, give him the pencil. You are to ask the questions, Mr. Melas, and he will write the answers. Ask him first of all whether he is prepared to sign the papers?'

"The man's eyes flashed fire.

"'Never!' he wrote in Greek upon the slate.

"'On no conditions?' I asked, at the bidding of our tyrant.

"'Only if I see her married in my presence by a Greek priest whom I know.'

"The man giggled in his venomous way.

"'You know what awaits you, then?'

"'I care nothing for myself.'

"These are samples of the questions and answers which made up our strange half-spoken, half-written conversation. Again and again I had to ask him whether he would give in and sign the documents. Again and again I had the same indignant reply. But soon a happy thought came to me. I took to adding on little sentences of my own to each question, innocent ones at first, to test whether either of our companions knew anything of the matter, and then, as I found that they showed no sign I played a more dangerous game. Our conversation ran something like this:

"'You can do no good by this obstinacy. *Who are you?*

"'I care not. *I am a stranger in London.*'

"'Your fate will be on you own head. *How long have you been here?*'

"'Let it be so. *Three weeks.*'

"'The property can never be yours. *What ails you?*'

"'It shall not go to villains. *They are starving me.*'

"'You shall go free if you sign. *What house is this?*'

"'I will never sign. *I do not know.*'

"'You are not doing her any service. *What is your name?*'

"'Let me hear her say so. *Kratides.*'

"'You shall see her if you sign. *Where are you from?*'

"'Then I shall never see her. *Athens.*'

"Another five minutes, Mr. Holmes, and I should have wormed out the whole story under their very noses. My very next question might have cleared the matter up, but at that instant the door opened and a woman stepped into the room. I could not see her clearly enough to know more than that she was tall and graceful, with black hair, and clad in some sort of loose white gown.

"'Harold,' said she, speaking English with a broken accent. 'I could not stay away longer. It is so lonely up there with only— Oh, my God, it is Paul!'

"These last words were in Greek, and at the same instant the man with a convulsive effort tore the plaster from his lips, and screaming out 'Sophy! Sophy!' rushed into the woman's arms. Their embrace was but for an instant, however, for the younger man seized the woman and pushed her out of the room, while the elder easily overpowered his emaciated victim, and dragged him away through the other door. For a moment I was left alone in the room, and I sprang to my feet with some vague idea that I might in some way get a clue to what this house was in which I found myself. Fortunately, however, I took no steps, for looking up I saw that the older man was standing in the door-way, with his eyes fixed upon me.

"'That will do, Mr. Melas,' said he. 'You perceive that we have taken you into our confidence over some very private business. We should not have troubled you, only that our friend who speaks Greek and who began these negotiations has been forced to return to the East. It was quite necessary for us to find some one to take his place, and we were fortunate in hearing of your powers.'

"I bowed.

" 'There are five sovereigns here,' said he, walking up to me, 'which will, I hope, be a sufficient fee. But remember,' he added, tapping me lightly on the chest and giggling, 'if you speak to a human soul about this—one human soul, mind—well, may God have mercy upon your soul!'

"I cannot tell you the loathing and horror with which this insignificant-looking man inspired me. I could see him better now as the lamp-light shone upon him. His features were peaky and sallow, and his little pointed beard was thready and ill-nourished. He pushed his face forward as he spoke and his lips and eyelids were continually twitching like a man with St. Vitus's dance. I could not help thinking that his strange, catchy little laugh was also a symptom of some nervous malady. The terror of his face lay in his eyes, however, steel gray, and glistening coldly with a malignant, inexorable cruelty in their depths.

" 'We shall know if you speak of this,' said he. 'We have our own means of information. Now you will find the carriage waiting, and my friend will see you on your way.'

"I was hurried through the hall and into the vehicle, again obtaining that momentary glimpse of trees and a garden. Mr. Latimer followed closely at my heels, and took his place opposite to me without a word. In silence we again drove for an interminable distance with the windows raised, until at last, just after midnight, the carriage pulled up.

" 'You will get down here, Mr. Melas,' said my companion. 'I am sorry to leave you so far from your house, but there is no alternative. Any attempt upon your part to follow the carriage can only end in injury to yourself.'

"He opened the door as he spoke, and I had hardly time to spring out when the coachman lashed the horse and the carriage rattled away. I looked around me in astonishment. I was on some sort of a heathy common mottled over with dark clumps of furze-bushes. Far away stretched a line of houses, with a light here and there in the upper windows. On the other side I saw the red signal-lamps of a railway.

"The carriage which had brought me was already out of

sight. I stood gazing round and wondering where on earth I might be, when I saw some one coming towards me in the darkness. As he came up to me I made out that he was a railway porter.

"'Can you tell me what place this is?' I asked.

"'Wandsworth Common,' said he.

"'Can I get a train into town?'

"'If you walk on a mile or so to Clapham Junction,' said he, 'you'll just be in time for the last to Victoria.'

"So that was the end of my adventure, Mr. Holmes. I do not know where I was, nor whom I spoke with, nor anything save what I have told you. But I know that there is foul play going on, and I want to help that unhappy man if I can. I told the whole story to Mr. Mycroft Holmes next morning, and subsequently to the police."

We all sat in silence for some little time after listening to this extraordinary narrative. Then Sherlock looked across at his brother.

"Any steps?" he asked.

Mycroft picked up the *Daily News*, which was lying on the side-table.

"'Anybody supplying any information as to the whereabouts of a Greek gentleman named Paul Kratides, from Athens, who is unable to speak English, will be rewarded. A similar reward paid to any one giving information about a Greek lady whose first name is Sophy. X 2473.' That was in all the dailies. No answer."

"How about the Greek Legation?"

"I have inquired. They know nothing."

"A wire to the head of the Athens police, then?"

"Sherlock has all the energy of the family," said Mycroft, turning to me. "Well, you take the case up by all means, and let me know if you do any good."

"Certainly," answered my friend, rising from his chair. "I'll let you know, and Mr. Melas also. In the meantime, Mr. Melas, I should certainly be on my guard, if I were you, for of course they must know through these advertisements that you have betrayed them."

As we walked home together, Holmes stopped at a telegraph office and sent off several wires.

"You see, Watson," he remarked, "our evening has been by no means wasted. Some of my most interesting cases have come to me in this way through Mycroft. The problem which we have just listened to, although it can admit of but one explanation, has still some distinguishing features."

"You have hopes of solving it?"

"Well, knowing as much as we do, it will be singular indeed if we fail to discover the rest. You must yourself have formed some theory which will explain the facts to which we have listened."

"In a vague way, yes."

"What was your idea, then?"

"It seemed to me to be obvious that this Greek girl had been carried off by the young Englishman named Harold Latimer."

"Carried off from where?"

"Athens, perhaps."

Sherlock Holmes shook his head. "This young man could not talk a word of Greek. The lady could talk English fairly well. Inference—that she had been in England some little time, but he had not been in Greece."

"Well, then, we will presume that she had come on a visit to England, and that this Harold had persuaded her to fly with him."

"That is more probable."

"Then the brother—for that, I fancy, must be the relationship—comes over from Greece to interfere. He imprudently puts himself into the power of the young man and his older associate. They seize him and use violence towards him in order to make him sign some papers to make over the girl's fortune—of which he may be trustee—to them. This he refuses to do. In order to negotiate with him they have to get an interpreter, and they pitch upon this Mr. Melas, having used some other one before. The girl is not told of the arrival of her brother, and finds it out by the merest accident."

"Excellent, Watson!" cried Holmes. "I really fancy that

you are not far from the truth. You see that we hold all the cards, and we have only to fear some sudden act of violence on their part. If they give us time we must have them."

"But how can we find where this house lies?"

"Well, if our conjecture is correct and the girl's name is or was Sophy Kratides, we should have no difficulty in tracing her. That must be our main hope, for the brother is, of course, a complete stranger. It is clear that some time has elapsed since this Harold established these relations with the girl—some weeks, at any rate—since the brother in Greece has had time to hear of it and come across. If they have been living in the same place during this time, it is probable that we shall have some answer to Mycroft's advertisement."

We had reached our house in Baker Street while we had been talking. Holmes ascended the stair first, and as he opened the door of our room he gave a start of surprise. Looking over his shoulder, I was equally astonished. His brother Mycroft was sitting smoking in the arm-chair.

"Come in, Sherlock! Come, in, sir," said he, blandly, smiling at our surprised faces. "You don't expect such energy from me, do you, Sherlock? But somehow this case attracts me."

"How did you get here?"

"I passed you in a hansom."

"There has been some new development?"

"I had an answer to my advertisement."

"Ah!"

"Yes, it came within a few minutes of your leaving."

"And to what effect?"

Mycroft Holmes took out a sheet of paper.

"Here it is," said he, "written with a J pen on royal cream paper by a middle-aged man with a weak constitution. 'Sir,' he says, 'in answer to your advertisement of to-day's date, I beg to inform you that I know the young lady in question very well. If you should care to call upon me I could give you some particulars as to her painful history. She is living at present at The Myrtles, Beckenham. Yours faithfully, J. Davenport.'

"He writes from Lower Brixton," said Mycroft Holmes. "Do you not think that we might drive to him now, Sherlock, and learn these particulars?"

"My dear Mycroft, the brother's life is more valuable than the sister's story. I think we should call at Scotland Yard for Inspector Gregson, and go straight out to Beckenham. We know that a man is being done to death, and every hour may be vital."

"Better pick up Mr. Melas on our way," I suggested. "We may need an interpreter."

"Excellent," said Sherlock Holmes. "Send the boy for a four-wheeler, and we shall be off at once." He opened the table-drawer as he spoke, and I noticed that he slipped his revolver into his pocket. "Yes," said he, in answer to my glance; "I should say, from what we have heard, that we are dealing with a particularly dangerous gang."

It was almost dark before we found ourselves in Pall Mall at the rooms of Mr. Melas. A gentleman had just called for him, and he was gone.

"Can you tell me where?" asked Mycroft Holmes.

"I don't know, sir," answered the woman who had opened the door; "I only know that he drove away with the gentleman in a carriage."

"Did the gentleman give a name?"

"No, sir."

"He wasn't a tall, handsome, dark young man?"

"Oh, no, sir. He was a little gentleman, with glasses, thin in the face, but very pleasant in his ways, for he was laughing all the time that he was talking."

"Come along!" cried Sherlock Holmes, abruptly. "This grows serious," he observed, as we drove to Scotland Yard. "These men have got hold of Melas again. He is a man of no physical courage, as they are well aware from their experience the other night. This villain was able to terrorize him the instant that he got into his presence. No doubt they want his professional services, but, having used him, they may be inclined to punish him for what they will regard as his treachery."

Our hope was that, by taking train, we might get to Beckenham as soon as or sooner than the carriage. On reaching Scotland Yard, however, it was more than an hour before we could get Inspector Gregson and comply with the legal formalities which would enable us to enter the house. It was a quarter to ten before we reached London Bridge, and half past before the four of us alighted on the Beckenham platform. A drive of half a mile brought us to The Myrtles—a large, dark house standing back from the road in its own grounds. Here we dismissed our cab, and made our way up the drive together.

"The windows are all dark," remarked the inspector. "The house seems deserted."

"Our birds are flown and the nest empty," said Holmes.

"Why do you say so?"

"A carriage heavily loaded with luggage has passed out during the last hour."

The inspector laughed. "I saw the wheel-tracks in the light of the gate-lamp, but where does the luggage come in?"

"You may have observed the same wheel-tracks going the other way. But the outward-bound ones were very much deeper—so much so that we can say for a certainty that there was a very considerable weight on the carriage."

"You get a trifle beyond me there," said the inspector, shrugging his shoulders. "It will not be an easy door to force, but we will try if we cannot make some one hear us."

He hammered loudly at the knocker and pulled at the bell, but without any success. Holmes had slipped away, but he came back in a few minutes.

"I have a window open," said he.

"It is a mercy that you are on the side of the force, and not against it, Mr. Holmes," remarked the inspector, as he noted the clever way in which my friend had forced back the catch. "Well, I think that under the circumstances we may enter without an invitation."

One after the other we made our way into a large apartment, which was evidently that in which Mr. Melas had found himself. The inspector had lit his lantern, and by its light

we could see the two doors, the curtain, the lamp, and the suit of Japanese mail as he had described them. On the table lay two glasses, an empty brandy-bottle, and the remains of a meal.

"What is that?" asked Holmes, suddenly.

We all stood still and listened. A low moaning sound was coming from somewhere over our heads. Holmes rushed to the door and out into the hall. The dismal noise came from upstairs. He dashed up, the inspector and I at his heels, while his brother Mycroft followed as quickly as his great bulk would permit.

Three doors faced us upon the second floor, and it was from the central of these that the sinister sounds were issuing, sinking sometimes into a dull mumble and rising again into a shrill whine. It was locked, but the key had been left on the outside. Holmes flung open the door and rushed in, but he was out again in an instant, with his hand to his throat.

"It's charcoal," he cried. "Give it time. It will clear."

Peering in, we could see that the only light in the room came from a dull blue flame which flickered from a small brass tripod in the centre. It threw a livid, unnatural circle upon the floor, while in the shadows beyond we saw the vague loom of two figures which crouched against the wall. From the open door there reeked a horrible poisonous exhalation which set us gasping and coughing. Holmes rushed to the top of the stairs to draw in the fresh air, and then, dashing into the room, he threw up the window and hurled the brazen tripod out into the garden.

"We can enter in a minute," he gasped, darting out again. "Where is a candle? I doubt if we could strike a match in that atmosphere. Hold the light at the door and we shall get them out, Mycroft, now!"

With a rush we got to the poisoned men and dragged them out into the well-lit hall. Both of them were blue-lipped and insensible, with swollen, congested faces and protruding eyes. Indeed, so distorted were their features that, save for his black beard and stout figure, we might haves failed to recognize in one of them the Greek interpreter who had parted

from us only a few hours before at the Diogenes Club. His hands and feet were securely strapped together, and he bore over one eye the marks of a violent blow. The other, who was secured in a similar fashion, was a tall man in the last stage of emaciation, with several strips of sticking-plaster arranged in a grotesque pattern over his face. He had ceased to moan as we laid him down, and a glance showed me that for him at least our aid had come too late. Mr. Melas, however, still lived, and in less than an hour, with the aid of ammonia and brandy, I had the satisfaction of seeing him open his eyes, and of knowing that my hand had drawn him back from that dark valley in which all paths meet.

It was a simple story which he had to tell, and one which did but confirm our own deductions. His visitor, on entering his rooms, had drawn a life-preserver from his sleeve, and had so impressed him with the fear of instant and inevitable death that he had kidnapped him for the second time. Indeed, it was almost mesmeric, the effect which this giggling ruffian had produced upon the unfortunate linguist, for he could not speak of him save with trembling hands and a blanched cheek. He had been taken swiftly to Beckenham, and had acted as interpreter in a second interview, even more dramatic than the first, in which the two Englishmen had menaced their prisoner with instant death if he did not comply with their demands. Finally, finding him proof against every threat, they had hurled him back into his prison, and after reproaching Melas with his treachery, which appeared from the newspaper advertisement, they had stunned him with a blow from a stick, and he remembered nothing more until he found us bending over him.

And this was the singular case of the Grecian Interpreter, the explanation of which is still involved in some mystery. We were able to find out, by communicating with the gentleman who had answered the advertisement, that the unfortunate young lady came of a wealthy Grecian family, and that she had been on a visit to some friends in England. While there she had met a young man named Harold Latimer, who had acquired an ascendency over her and had eventually per-

suaded her to fly with him. Her friends, shocked at the event, had contented themselves with informing her brother at Athens, and had then washed their hands of the matter. The brother, on his arrival in England, had imprudently placed himself in the power of Latimer and of his associate, whose name was Wilson Kemp—a man of the foulest antecedents. These two, finding that through his ignorance of the language he was helpless in their hands, had kept him a prisoner, and had endeavored by cruelty and starvation to make him sign away his own and his sister's property. They had kept him in the house without the girl's knowledge, and the plaster over the face had been for the purpose of making recognition difficult in case she should ever catch a glimpse of him. Her feminine perceptions, however, had instantly seen through the disguise when, on the occasion of the interpreter's visit, she had seen him for the first time. The poor girl, however, was herself a prisoner, for there was no one about the house except the man who acted as coachman, and his wife, both of whom were tools of the conspirators. Finding that their secret was out, and that their prisoner was not to be coerced, the two villains with the girl had fled away at a few hours' notice from the furnished house which they had hired, having first, as they thought, taken vengeance both upon the man who had defied and the one who had betrayed them.

Months afterwards a curious newspaper cutting reached us from Buda-Pesth. It told how two Englishmen who had been travelling with a woman had met with a tragic end. They had each been stabbed, it seems, and the Hungarian police were of opinion that they had quarrelled and had inflicted mortal injuries upon each other. Holmes, however, is, I fancy, of a different way of thinking, and he holds to this day that, if one could find the Grecian girl, one might learn how the wrongs of herself and her brother came to be avenged.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What does Conan Doyle accomplish by means of the first paragraph?

2. Why does Conan Doyle call attention to Sherlock Holmes's scholarship?
3. Why do we at once become interested in Mycroft Holmes?
4. In what respects is Mycroft Holmes peculiar?
5. How does the Diogenes Club differ from ordinary clubs?
6. How does Conan Doyle illustrate the remarkable powers of Sherlock Holmes and of his brother?
7. Why did Conan Doyle make the approach to the principal story several pages in length?
8. In what respects are the opening events of the principal story unusual?
9. Why does the author make so little explanation in the course of the story?
10. Explain and illustrate Conan Doyle's method of showing character.
11. At a point half-way through the story, assume that you are Sherlock Holmes; what deductions would you make?
12. Why did Mr. Latimer leave the Greek interpreter so far from his home?
13. Who placed advertisements in the papers? What does that action show concerning the man who placed them?
14. How does Conan Doyle arouse suspense as well as curiosity?
15. Narrate the climax of the story.
16. Explain the methods by which Conan Doyle reveals the explanation of all the events.
17. Explain the hint given in the last paragraph.

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

Although seemingly complex, the materials of the story called "The Greek Interpreter" are simple: two men have unusual powers; to them comes a man who wishes explanation of a mystery; they solve his problem, and, incidentally, save his life. The author presents numerous vividly told incidents, and develops much striking action. He employs quick, sharp dialogue.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, imagine some one who has powers beyond the ordinary, and have him suddenly called upon to solve a problem of genuine importance. Introduce much incident and dialogue.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. A person has an almost photographic memory of places. To him comes some one who has lost an article of considerable value. After

some effort, the person with the remarkable memory shows how to find the lost article. He makes the discovery at a moment that prevents serious loss.

2. A person has read a great number of books. A mysterious paper makes a series of literary allusions that the holders of the paper cannot identify. After a time the well-read person solves the mystery, and brings comfort to certain needy people.
3. A boy, or a girl, goes about a great deal in a hilly, wooded section of the country. Police officers are looking for a hiding-place for stolen goods. The young person thinks of many good hiding-places with which he is familiar, and at last leads the officers to the actual hiding-place of the stolen goods, thereby saving a storekeeper from commercial failure.
4. An old woman has the habit of stopping to pet every little child she sees. A child is kidnapped. The old woman remembers having seen such a child as the one that was kidnapped. Ultimately she effects the restoration of the child to his parents.
5. An important will cannot be found. A child accustomed to play "Hide the Thimble" remembers having seen a paper that looked important, and thus saves a widow from destitution.

ERNIE MENDENHALL *

By Zona Gale

Zona Gale, one of the leading American writers of the present day, was born in Wisconsin. In 1920 she won special renown because of her humorous and sympathetic novel, *Miss Lulu Bett*. Later, for the play based upon the same book, she received a Pulitzer Prize. In such volumes as *Friendship Village* (1907), *Friendship Village Love Stories* (1909), *Neighborhood Stories* (1914), *Peace in Friendship Village* (1919), and *Miss Lulu Bett* (1920), she showed her keen interest in human nature and her rare power to delineate odd and kindly personalities. Among her other prose works are the following: *Romance Island* (1906), *Mothers to Men* (1911), *When I Was a Little Girl* (1913), *Hearts Kindred* (1915), *A Daughter of Tomorrow* (1917). In addition to these books, she has written several volumes of poems and a number of plays.

ERNIE MENDENHALL was now forty-two years old, and still he had found no one with whom to share his home. His home was a white house in the town of Oderhill, and its little garden had fine hollyhocks. For four years, since the death of his parents, he had lived there alone, and in those four years he had bought now and then a piece of old furniture or a rug or some small article for his house. Every time that he did this, the neighbors would say: "Ernie Mendenhall must be going to get married." But so far he had not married. He earned his living as part-time secretary for a Writer who lived on the edge of town. Every morning the neighbors saw Ernie's long form, swinging its right arm and holding its left stiff as it hurried along, his lips moving in

* From *The Bookman*, copyright, 1925, by George H. Doran Company; copyright, 1926, by Zona Gale. Reprinted by special permission of *The Bookman*, of Zona Gale, and of D. Appleton & Co., publishers of *Yellow Gentians and Blue*, by Zona Gale, copyright, 1927, by D. Appleton & Co.

imagined talk. And they said: "What can he be talking about, to himself that way? He hasn't any business of his own to reckon up."

One summer week-end the Writer had a house-party and Alla Vintrin was his guest. On Sunday morning she walked into the library where Ernie was working. He saw her frail beauty in its pink linen enclosure, her delicate profile, her heavy hair. The linen, the profile, and the heavy hair attacked him as an epidemic attacks, and he was as one who catches a cold instantly and pervadingly.

She said: "Is the old secretary in this room—the Governor Winthrop secretary? . . ."

"Here," said Ernie with immense difficulty, and bowed, and perceived that he had bowed not to her but to the secretary.

He managed to talk to her about that piece of old mahogany. Afterward he wondered whether he had not perhaps said: "It has a beautiful profile, heavy hair, and it wears pink." And though he tried in agony to recall her words, he could recover nothing save an assent, a murmur, a perfume.

Next he noted, from a great distance, that he was saying to her, if she was interested in old furniture, he had some good pieces in his house, if she cared. . . . And she said alertly that she did care, and could she see them that morning? With no more thought of the Writer than of an eagle on a far cliff, Ernie walked out of the house and down the streets of Oderhill, and beside him she went.

She said little—he liked her for that. She walked rapidly—that he liked. She was not so tall as he, she observed the flowers, she stopped and spoke to a child—she was perfect.

Thanking God for an upbringing which had forced him to keep order in his house, he opened his front door and let her in upon the hooked rugs, the cherry chairs, and the one piece of rosewood. It was before this melodeon of rosewood that Alla Vintrin paused at last, then sat, pulled out the stops, and pressed from the reluctant instrument its few remaining tones.

And at the sound of music, played by her, in his home, Ernie's years of waiting cried from his throat these words:

"Could you stay? Could you live here? Could you be my wife?" And this he did not hear himself saying from a distance. No, for he was in the very words themselves.

She looked round the room, small, sweet and colored, and at the hollyhocks motionless beyond the glass. "Why not?" she said.

"You could? You would?" He was not sure that he said this at all. And all that he heard her say was "Why not?" as she moved to the door. He walked beside her under the maples, and told her about his life. Always he had wanted to tell somebody about his life, but when he had tried, his confidante had looked at him. Eyes could be puzzled, amused, disdainful. Alla did not look at him. She merely walked beside him and listened. "Could you? Would you?" Ernie cried when he had done.

"Why not?" she said again, with immense sadness.

In the corridor at the Writer's house she gave him her hand, saying only: "I shall see you again, Mr. Mendenhall—this afternoon, perhaps."

But that Sunday afternoon all the house-party decided to motor back to town. Ernie, who had made his task last into the day, heard them go, saw them go, and sat at his desk mute and blind.

Three days later he had a note from Alla:

> . . . and I know exactly how you are feeling because you spoke so. I have asked one or two men to marry me and wished afterward that I hadn't spoken. But you mustn't mind. Those forty-two years in Oderhill—you are likely to ask anybody, anywhere. . . . I did mean to speak to you about the melodeon. I assume that those things are for sale, and if the melodeon is at all within my reach I should like very much to buy it. . . .

Every day the neighbors saw Ernie's long form as it hurried along, his lips moving in imagined talk with someone.

He was writing to Alla Vintrin, composing his letters as he walked the streets. He was telling her of his life, its routine, its emptiness. These letters he dared to write out. When her bread and butter letter came to the Writer, Ernie copied the

address, and it burned on his bureau. One night, when it rained, he took out his letters to her, read them over, selected the mildest, addressed it, carried it in his pocket for days. One day when he had an influenza, he took the letter from his pocket and mailed it.

As soon as the letter was mailed, he fashioned her reply, many replies. She would be kind, she would be cold, she would be cruel. All these replies he wrote in his mind. When days passed and no reply came, he said to himself that she had gone abroad. And when his letter reached her, at some lonely foreign place, how touched and warmed she would be that he had remembered. He thought that she would write: "My dear friend, you move me greatly." Once he had taken down that sentence, dictated by the Writer: "My dear friend, you move me greatly." No answer came, but when he was at home for a week with lumbago, he chose another of his letters to her and mailed that. It required a calling down by the Writer and his own omission from an Oderhill wedding reception to bring the third and fourth letters to the mail box. In all Ernie sent off six letters. But the mails, he knew, were uncertain. So he continued to fashion her replies. At last he wrote down these replies, and he would read them, at home, in the evenings: "My dear friend, you move me greatly." His lips whispered as he read. He remembered the phrases in her letters and in his own, and he would go down the street, swinging his right arm and holding his left arm stiff as he hurried along. And the neighbors said: "What can he be talking about to himself that way?"

One night, sitting alone by his stove, going over one of her replies, it occurred to Ernie Mendenhall that he was tired of those things that he was saying, as having come from her. What else would she say? He could think of nothing else. Certainly these were rather tiresome—talk about his safety, his loneliness, her coming to Oderhill. Even "My dear friend, you move me greatly" had become tiresome by repetition. Somewhat irritably he saluted the image of her, writing to him, saying to him the same thing over and over. Couldn't she think of anything else to say?

He began to be bored with her. Feeling the wind blowing in the back of his neck, he asked her quite irritably what had made her leave the window open at the top. Finding the fire low he said to her, in his mind, that she could certainly put in a stick of wood when it was he who filled the woodbox. And when the clock struck a wrong hour he exclaimed aloud to her that with all that he had to do, earning their living, he should have thought that she might wind the clock. The next morning when he watered a favorite plant he saw that water had dripped down on the rosewood melodeon, and he cried reproachfully: "You who pretended to care for this rosewood melodeon, what have you ever done to protect it?" But at that she answered up quite tartly, and he was startled and hastened out of the house.

He found that his homecomings had acquired a new fascination. He would come hurrying into the house and cry: "What? No fire? No supper? A great way to treat a man who's been slaving all day for you." "Slaving indeed!" would come her clear reply. "Writing a few letters for a pittance. I've a good mind to sell your old rosewood melodeon and make real money for us." At that he would fly into a rage, and then grow sullen, and would eat no dinner—actually did eat none; and imagined Alla Vintrin Mendenhall cooking a steak savory with onions and eating it all alone. Occasionally he would smile at himself awkwardly; but less and less often.

Then a child was born to the Writer, and Ernie Mendenhall was extremely shaken. Arriving one morning for work, he heard that faint wailing above-stairs. All day when the cry came he could do nothing but listen. And when he went home at night, there was Alla Vintrin Mendenhall with a child.

But now his imagination failed. He had no idea what he would say to her. He could not even look at her. Suddenly she was not there any more, but was wrapt away from him, absorbed in a wailing cry. Sometimes he could catch an outline of her bending head, but when she turned toward him, her face blindingly disappeared and the game stopped. He sat by the stove and imagined her in the room above-stairs. He

never went there. It was many nights before she was downstairs with him again. He sat making milk toast when she entered. He looked at her in awe and in silence, but then his milk boiled over onto the griddle and he said: "Is it or isn't it a woman's job to keep things from boiling over, say?" And when he blackened the toast he became fairly caustic. After that they resumed their old quarrels. When she was unconsciously exasperating, Ernie Mendenhall would hurry along the streets, his lips moving as he rehearsed what he would tell her. And the neighbors would say: "Ernie Mendenhall—don't you s'pose he works out puzzles as he walks?"

As the holidays came near, he wandered about in the shops of the little town, thinking of a gift for her and one for the child. But when he touched this or that, it seemed not worthy of them. He bought one little gift, a vase to stand on her melodeon—he thought of it as her melodeon—and on Christmas Eve he filled the vase with roses and watched her bend above it, with the child. He thought: "Maybe they meant something like this about Christmas. Maybe it has something to do with somebody being born not of the flesh—" But this he dismissed as unlikely. He prolonged the evening, became involved in dressing an imaginary tree, very tall, and ended in disagreeing with her about having so much tinsel stuff all over everything; found the fire out, and went to bed annoyed by her obstinacy and her carelessness. But he woke once and smelled the roses.

In the holiday week, he came dragging home from his work one dim afternoon, and as he approached his house with its white-folded spruces, he felt a sense of utter weariness at the look of it. At once he knew this as the weariness of the end of a game. He understood that the game had played itself out. All was over, it seemed, the funeral, all; and he entered upon his house as it had been before ever he had seen her. He moved through the little empty rooms, looking at them so differently. Desolation flowed through him. He could experience, but he could not believe that she was gone.

In his mail box a letter waited. Before he opened it he knew her touch. Alla Vintrin wrote: "Dear Sir: Is the rose-

wood melodeon still for sale? I was married in the spring. and now that we are furnishing our house—'' He replied: ''Dear Madame: The rosewood melodeon is not for sale. I wish to keep it on account of its associations. . . .'' He went into the white evening and posted the letter at the box where he had posted all the others, which she must have received; and he turned back toward the house where she had died.

He had fallen in love, experienced domesticity, been bored by it and was left alone in Christmas week with the child whom none had ever begotten. He recounted these things to himself as he walked. And the neighbors, meeting him, said: ''Ernie Mendenhall, he's always talking away about something.''

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. How does the abrupt beginning affect the reader's interest in the story?
2. What does the first paragraph tell concerning Ernie Mendenhall?
3. In what respects are Ernie Mendenhall and Alla Vintrin corresponding characters, and in what respects are they contrasting characters?
4. What is Alla Vintrin's character?
5. What is Alla Vintrin's feeling toward Ernie Mendenhall?
6. Why does Ernie Mendenhall care for Alla Vintrin?
7. How does the repetition of certain expressions affect the reader?
8. What leads Ernie Mendenhall to live in an imaginary world rather than in the real world?
9. In what respects is the story pathetic?
10. What is the effect of the conclusion?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"Ernie Mendenhall" is a sympathetic character sketch of a peculiarly lonely man whose heart, reaching out for fellowship, leads him to live in a dream world. By the repetition of such expressions as "What can he be talking about to himself that way?" the author gives the sketch something of the effect of a poem. In the story suggestive presentation of character is combined with extreme sympathy of treatment.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, think of a person who might be expected to have unfulfilled longings for a fuller life. Invent

any plot that will reveal the person's character in a wholly sympathetic way.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. An aged woman whose life has been greatly restricted longs for foreign travel.
2. A person who has never had more than the bare necessities of life wishes for luxuries.
3. One who has led a humble career dreams of position and power.
4. A confirmed invalid imagines himself about to be restored to vigorous health
5. An old person whose earlier friends have long been dead thinks of them as if they were living.

THE LUCK OF ROARING CAMP *

By Bret Harte

Bret Harte (Francis Bret Harte, 1839–1902), noted for his stories of California in the rough period that followed the discovery of gold in that region, was born in Albany, New York, where his father was professor of Greek in Albany College. At the age of seventeen, after his father's death, Bret Harte went to California, where at different times he worked as teacher, gold-miner, printer, express messenger, editor, and professor in the University of California. In 1871 he removed to New York City, where he lived for the following seven years. From 1878 to 1880 he was United States consul at Crefeld, Germany, and from 1880 to 1885, United States consul at Glasgow, Scotland. From 1885 until his death he resided in London.

Bret Harte's best short stories concern the heroism, the nobility, and the unexpected kindness that he saw under the rough exterior of swaggering miners who lived, at it were, beyond the pale of ordinary law, in a time when whatever is elemental in human nature was sure to appear.

THERE was commotion in Roaring Camp. It could not have been a fight, for in 1850 that was not novel enough to have called together the entire settlement. The ditches and claims were not only deserted, but "Tuttle's grocery" had contributed its gamblers, who, it will be remembered, calmly continued their game the day that French Pete and Kanaka Joe shot each other to death over the bar in the front room. The whole camp was collected before a rude cabin on the outer edge of the clearing. Conversation was carried on in a low tone, but the name of a woman was frequently repeated. It was a name familiar enough in the camp,—"Cherokee Sal."

Perhaps the less said of her the better. She was a coarse,

* From *The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Stories*, by Bret Harte, published by M. A. Donohue & Co. Reprinted by special permission of M. A. Donohue & Co.

and, it is to be feared, a very sinful woman. But at that time she was the only woman in Roaring Camp, and was just then lying in sore extremity, when she most needed the ministration of her own sex. Dissolute, abandoned, and irreclaimable, she was yet suffering a martyrdom hard enough to bear even when veiled by sympathizing womanhood, but now terrible in her loneliness. The primal curse had come to her in that original isolation which must have made the punishment of the first transgression so dreadful. It was, perhaps, part of the expiation of her sin, that, at a moment when she most lacked her sex's intuitive tenderness and care, she met only the half-contemptuous faces of her masculine associates. Yet a few of the spectators were, I think, touched by her sufferings. Sandy Tipton thought it was "rough on Sal," and, in the contemplation of her condition, for a moment rose superior to the fact that he had an ace and two bowers in his sleeve.

It will be seen, also that the situation was novel. Deaths were by no means uncommon in Roaring Camp, but a birth was a new thing. People had been dismissed from the camp effectively, finally, and with no possibility of return; but this was the first time that anybody had been introduced *ab initio.* Hence the excitement.

"You go in there, Stumpy," said a prominent citizen known as "Kentuck," addressing one of the loungers. "Go in there, and see what you kin do. You've had experience in them things."

Perhaps there was a fitness in the selection. Stumpy, in other climes, had been the putative head of two families; in fact, it was owing to some legal informality in these proceedings that Roaring Camp—a city of refuge—was indebted to his company. The crowd approved the choice, and Stumpy was wise enough to bow to the majority. The door closed on the extempore surgeon and midwife, and Roaring Camp sat down outside, smoked its pipe, and awaited the issue.

The assemblage numbered about a hundred men. One or two of these were actual fugitives from justice, some were criminal, and all were reckless. Physically, they exhibited no

indication of their past lives and character. The greatest scamp had a Raphael face, with a profusion of blond hair; Oakhurst, a gambler, had the melancholy air and intellectual abstraction of a Hamlet; the coolest and most courageous man was scarcely over five feet in height, with a soft voice and an embarrassed, timid manner. The term "roughs" applied to them was a distinction rather than a definition. Perhaps in the minor details of fingers, toes, ears, etc., the camp may have been deficient, but these slight omissions did not detract from their aggregate force. The strongest man had but three fingers on his right hand; the best shot had but one eye.

Such was the physical aspect of the men that were dispersed around the cabin. The camp lay in a triangular valley, between two hills and a river. The only outlet was a steep trail over the summit of a hill that faced the cabin, now illuminated by the rising moon. The suffering woman might have seen it from the rude bunk whereon she lay,—seen it winding like a silver thread until it was lost in the stars above.

A fire of withered pine-boughs added sociability to the gathering. By degrees the natural levity of Roaring Camp returned. Bets were freely offered and taken regarding the result. Three to five that "Sal would get through with it"; even, that the child would survive; side bets as to the sex and complexion of the coming stranger. In the midst of an exciting discussion an exclamation came from those nearest the door, and the camp stopped to listen. Above the swaying and moaning of the pines, the swift rush of the river, and the crackling of the fire, rose a sharp, querulous cry,—a cry unlike anything heard before in the camp. The pines stopped moaning, the river ceased to rush, and the fire to crackle. It seemed as if Nature had stopped to listen too.

The camp rose to its feet as one man! It was proposed to explode a barrel of gunpowder, but, in consideration of the situation of the mother, better counsels prevailed, and only a few revolvers were discharged; for, whether owing to the rude surgery of the camp, or some other reason, Cherokee Sal was sinking fast. Within an hour she had climbed, as it were, that rugged road that led to the stars, and so passed out of

Roaring Camp, its sin and shame forever. I do not think that the announcement disturbed them much, except in speculation as to the fate of the child. "Can he live now?" was asked of Stumpy. The answer was doubtful. The only other being of Cherokee Sal's sex and maternal condition in the settlement was an ass. There was some conjecture as to fitness, but the experiment was tried. It was less problematical than the ancient treatment of Romulus and Remus, and apparently as successful.

When these details were completed, which exhausted another hour, the door was opened, and the anxious crowd of men who had already formed themselves into a queue, entered in single file. Beside the low bunk or shelf, on which the figure of the mother was starkly outlined below the blankets stood a pine table. On this a candle-box was placed, and within it, swathed in staring red flannel, lay the last arrival at Roaring Camp. Beside the candle-box was placed a hat. Its use was soon indicated. "Gentlemen," said Stumpy, with a singular mixture of authority and *ex officio* complacency,—"Gentlemen will please pass in at the front door, round the table, and out at the back. Them as wishes to contribute anything toward the orphan will find a hat handy." The first man entered with his hat on; he uncovered, however, as he looked about him, and so, unconsciously, set an example to the next. In such communities good and bad actions are catching. As the procession filed in, comments were audible,—criticisms addressed, perhaps, rather to Stumpy, in the character of showman, "Is that him?" "mighty small specimen"; "hasn't mor'n got the color"; "ain't bigger nor a derringer." The contributions were as characteristic: A silver tobacco-box; a doubloon; a navy revolver silver mounted; a gold specimen; a very beautifully embroidered lady's handkerchief (from Oakhurst the gambler); a diamond breastpin; a diamond ring (suggested by the pin, with the remark from the giver that he "saw that pin and went two diamonds better"); a slung shot; a Bible (contributor not detected); a golden spur; a silver teaspoon (the initials, I regret to say, were not the giver's); a pair of surgeon's shears; a lancet; a Bank of Eng-

land note for £5; and about $200 in loose gold and silver coin. During these proceedings Stumpy maintained a silence as impassive as the dead on his left, a gravity as inscrutable as that of the newly born on his right. Only one incident occurred to break the monotony of the curious procession. As Kentuck bent over the candle-box half curiously, the child turned, and, in a spasm of pain, caught at his groping finger, and held it fast for a moment. Kentuck looked foolish and embarrassed. Something like a blush tried to assert itself in his weather-beaten cheek; "The d—d little cuss!" he said, as he extricated his finger, with, perhaps, more tenderness and care than he might have been deemed capable of showing. He held that finger a little apart from its fellows as he went out, and examined it curiously. The examination provoked the same original remark in regard to the child. In fact, he seemed to enjoy repeating it. "He rastled with my finger," he remarked to Tipton, holding up the member, "the d—d little cuss!"

It was four o'clock before the camp sought repose. A light burnt in the cabin where the watchers sat, for Stumpy did not go to bed that night. Nor did Kentuck. He drank quite freely, and related with great gusto his experience, invariably ending with his characteristic condemnation of the new-comer. It seemed to relieve him of any unjust implication of sentiment, and Kentuck had the weaknesses of the nobler sex. When everybody else had gone to bed, he walked down to the river, and whistled reflectively. Then he walked up the gulch, past the cabin, still whistling with demonstrative unconcern. At a large redwood tree he paused and retraced his steps, and again passed the cabin. Half-way down to the river's bank he again paused, and then returned and knocked at the door. It was opened by Stumpy. "How goes it?" said Kentuck, looking past Stumpy toward the candle-box. "All serene," replied Stumpy. "Anything up?" "Nothing." There was a pause—an embarrassing one—Stumpy still holding the door. Then Kentuck had recourse to his finger, which he held up to Stumpy. "Rastled with it,—the d—d little cuss," he said, and retired.

The next day Cherokee Sal had such rude sepulture as

Roaring Camp afforded. After her body had been committed to the hillside, there was a formal meeting of the camp to discuss what should be done with her infant. A resolution to adopt it was unanimous and enthusiastic. But an animated discussion in regard to the manner and feasibility of providing for its wants at once sprang up. It was remarkable that the argument partook of none of these fierce personalities with which discussions were usually conducted at Roaring Camp. Tipton proposed that they should send the child to Red Dog,—a distance of forty miles,—where female attention could be procured. But the unlucky suggestion met with fierce and unanimous opposition. It was evident that no plan which entailed parting from their new acquisition would for a moment be entertained. "Besides," said Tom Ryder, "them fellows at Red Dog would swap it, and ring in somebody else on us." A disbelief in the honesty of other camps prevailed at Roaring Camp as in other places.

The introduction of a female nurse in the camp also met with objection. It was argued that no decent woman could be prevailed to accept Roaring Camp as her home, and the speaker urged that "they didn't want any more of the other kind." This unkind allusion to the defunct mother, harsh as it may seem, was the first spasm of propriety,—the first symptom of the camp's regeneration. Stumpy advanced nothing. Perhaps he felt a certain delicacy in interfering with the selection of a possible successor in office. But when questioned, he averred stoutly that he and "Jinny"—the mammal before alluded to—could manage to rear the child. There was something original, independent, and heroic about the plan that pleased the camp, Stumpy was retained. Certain articles were sent for to Sacramento. "Mind," said the treasurer, as he pressed a bag of gold-dust into the expressman's hand, "the best that can be got,—lace, you know, and filigree-work and frills,—d—n the cost!"

Strange to say, the child thrived. Perhaps the invigorating climate of the mountain camp was compensation for material deficiencies. Nature took the foundling to her broader breast. In that rare atmosphere of the Sierra foot-hills,—that air

pungent with balsamic odor, that ethereal cordial at once bracing and exhilarating,—he may have found food and nourishment, or a subtle chemistry that transmuted asses' milk to lime and phosphorus. Stumpy inclined to the belief that it was the latter and good nursing. "Me and that ass," he would say, "has been father and mother to him! Don't you," he would add, apostrophizing the helpless bundle before him, "never go back on us."

By the time he was a month old, the necessity of giving him a name became apparent. He had generally been known as "the Kid," "Stumpy's boy," "the Cayote" (an allusion to his vocal powers), and even by Kentuck's endearing diminutive of "the d—d little cuss." But these were felt to be vague and unsatisfactory, and were at last dismissed under another influence. Gamblers and adventurers are generally superstitious, and Oakhurst one day declared that the baby had brought "the luck" to Roaring Camp. It was certain that of late they had been successful. "Luck" was the name agreed upon, with the prefix of Tommy for greater convenience. No allusion was made to the mother, and the father was unknown. "It's better," said the philosophical Oakhurst, "to take a fresh deal all round. Call him 'Luck,' and start him fair." A day was accordingly set apart for the christening. What was meant by this ceremony the reader may imagine, who has already gathered some idea of the reckless irreverence of Roaring Camp. The master of ceremonies was one "Boston," a noted wag, and the occasion seemed to promise the greatest facetiousness. This ingenious satirist had spent two days in preparing a burlesque of the church service, with pointed local allusions. The choir was properly trained, and Sandy Tipton was to stand godfather. But after the procession had marched to the grove with music and banners, and the child had been deposited before a mock altar. Stumpy stepped before the expectant crowd. "It ain't my style to spoil fun, boys," said the little man, stoutly, eyeing the faces around him, "but it strikes me that this thing ain't exactly on the square. It's playing it pretty low down on this yer baby to ring in fun on him that he ain't going to understand. And ef there's go-

ing to be any godfathers round, I'd like to see who's got any better rights than me." A silence followed Stumpy's speech. To the credit of all humorists be it said, that the first man to acknowledge its justice was the satirist, thus stopped of his fun. "But," said Stumpy, quickly, following up his advantage, "we're here for a christening, and we'll have it. I proclaim you Thomas Luck, according to the laws of the United States and the State of California, so help me God." It was the first time that the name of the Deity had been uttered otherwise than profanely in the camp. The form of christening was perhaps even more ludicrous than the satirist had conceived; but, strangely enough, nobody saw it and nobody laughed. "Tommy" was christened as seriously as he would have been under a Christian roof, and cried and was comforted in as orthodox fashion.

And so the work of regeneration began in Roaring Camp. Almost imperceptibly a change came over the settlement. The cabin assigned to "Tommy Luck"—or "The Luck," as he was more frequently called—first showed signs of improvement. It was kept scrupulously clean and white-washed. Then it was boarded, clothed, and papered. The rosewood cradle—packed eighty miles by mule—had, in Stumpy's way of putting it, "sorter killed the rest of the furniture." So the rehabilitation of the cabin became a necessity. The men who were in the habit of lounging in at Stumpy's to see "how 'The Luck' got on" seemed to appreciate the change, and, in self-defence, the rival establishment of "Tuttle's grocery" bestirred itself, and imported a carpet and mirrors. The reflections of the latter on the appearance of Roaring Camp tended to produce stricter habits of personal cleanliness. Again, Stumpy imposed a kind of quarantine upon those who aspired to the honor and privilege of holding "The Luck." It was a cruel mortification to Kentuck—who, in the carelessness of a large nature and the habits of frontier life, had begun to regard all garments as a second cuticle, which, like a snake's, only sloughed off through decay—to be debarred this privilege from certain prudential reasons. Yet such was the subtle influence of innovation that he thereafter appeared

regularly every afternoon in a clean shirt, and face still shining from his ablutions. Nor were moral and social sanitary laws neglected. "Tommy," who was supposed to spend his whole existence in a persistent attempt to repose, must not be disturbed by noise. The shouting and yelling which had gained the camp its infelicitous title were not permitted within hearing distance of Stumpy's. The men conversed in whispers, or smoked with Indian gravity. Profanity was tacitly given up in these sacred precincts, and throughout the camp a popular form of expletive, known as "D—n the luck!" and "Curse the luck!" was abandoned, as having a new personal bearing. Vocal music was not interdicted, being supposed to have a soothing, tranquillizing quality, and one song, sung by "Man-o'-War Jack," an English sailor, from Her Majesty's Australian colonies, was quite popular as a lullaby. It was a lugubrious recital of the exploits of "the Arethusa, Seventy-four," in a muffled minor, ending with a prolonged dying fall at the burden of each verse, "On b-o-o-o-ard of the Arethusa." It was a fine sight to see Jack holding "The Luck," rocking from side to side as if with the motion of a ship, and crooning forth this naval ditty. Either through the peculiar rocking of Jack or the length of his song,—it contained ninety stanzas, and was continued with conscientious deliberation to the bitter end,—the lullaby generally had the desired effect. At such times the men would lie at full length under the trees, in the soft summer twilight, smoking their pipes and drinking in the melodious utterances. An indistinct idea that this was pastoral happiness pervaded the camp. "This 'ere kind o' think," said the Cockney Simmons, meditatively reclining on his elbow, "is 'evingly." It reminded him of Greenwich.

On the long summer days "The Luck" was usually carried to the gulch, from whence the golden store of Roaring Camp was taken. There, on a blanket spread over pine-boughs, he would lie while the men were working in the ditches below. Latterly, there was a rude attempt to decorate this bower with flowers and sweet-smelling shrubs, and generally some one would bring him a cluster of wild honey-suckles, azaleas,

or the painted blossoms of Las Mariposas. The men had suddenly awakened to the fact that there were beauty and significance in these trifles, which they had so long trodden carelessly beneath their feet. A flake of glittering mica, a fragment of variegated quartz, a bright pebble from the bed of the creek, became beautiful to eyes thus cleared and strengthened, and were invariably put aside for "The Luck." It was wonderful how many treasures the woods and hillsides yielded that "would do for Tommy." Surrounded by playthings such as never child out of fairy-land had before, it is to be hoped that Tommy was content. He appeared to be securely happy, albeit there was an infantine gravity about him, a contemplative light in his round gray eyes, that sometimes worried Stumpy. He was always tractable and quiet, and it is recorded that once, having crept beyond his "corral," —a hedge of tessellated pine-boughs, which surrounded his bed,—he dropped over the bank on his head in the soft earth, and remained with his mottled legs in the air in that position for at least five minutes with unflinching gravity. He was extricated without a murmur. I hesitate to record the many other instances of his sagacity, which rest, unfortunately, upon the statements of prejudiced friends. Some of them were not without a tinge of superstition. "I crep' up the bank just now," said Kentuck one day, in a breathless state of excitement, "and dern my skin if he wasn't talking to a jaybird as was a sittin' on his lap. There they was, just as free and sociable as anything you please, a jawin' at each other just like two cherry-bums." Howbeit, whether creeping over the pine-boughs or lying lazily on his back blinking at the leaves above him, to him the birds sang, the squirrels chattered, and the flowers bloomed. Nature was his nurse and playfellow. For him she would let slip between the leaves golden shafts of sunlight that fell just within his grasp; she would send wandering breezes to visit him with the balm of bay and resinous gums; to him the tall red-woods nodded familiarly and sleepily, the bumble-bees buzzed, and the rooks cawed a slumbrous accompaniment.

Such was the golden summer of Roaring Camp. They were

"flush times,"—and the Luck was with them. The claims had yielded enormously. The camp was jealous of its privileges and looked suspiciously on strangers. No encouragement was given to immigration, and, to make their seclusion more perfect, the land on either side of the mountain wall that surrounded the camp they duly pre-empted. This, and a reputation for singular proficiency with the revolver, kept the reserve of Roaring Camp inviolate. The expressman—their only connecting link with the surrounding world—sometimes told wonderful stories of the camp. He would say, "They've a street up there in 'Roaring,' that would lay over any street in Red Dog. They've got vines and flowers round their houses, and they wash themselves twice a day. But they're mighty rough on strangers, and they worship an Ingin baby."

With the prosperity of the camp came a desire for further improvement. It was proposed to build a hotel in the following spring, and to invite one or two decent families to reside there for the sake of "The Luck,"—who might perhaps profit by female companionship. The sacrifice that this concession to the sex cost these men, who were fiercely sceptical in regard to its general virtue and usefulness, can only be accounted for by their affection for Tommy. A few still held out. But the resolve could not be carried into effect for three months, and the minority meekly yielded in the hope that something might turn up to prevent it. And it did.

The winter of 1851 will long be remembered in the foothills. The snow lay deep on the Sierras, and every mountain creek became a river, and every river a lake. Each gorge and gulch was transformed into a tumultuous watercourse that descended the hillsides, tearing down giant trees and scattering its drift and debris along the plain. Red Dog had been twice under the water, and Roaring Camp had been forewarned. "Water put the gold into them gulches," said Stumpy. "It's been here once and will be here again!" And that night the North Fork suddenly leaped over its banks, and swept up the triangular valley of Roaring Camp.

In the confusion of rushing water, crushing trees, and crackling timber, and the darkness which seemed to flow with

the water and blot out the fair valley, but little could be done to collect the scattered camp. When the morning broke, the cabin of Stumpy nearest the river-bank was gone. Higher up the gulch they found the body of its unlucky owner; but the pride, the hope, the joy, the Luck, of Roaring Camp had disappeared. They were returning with sad hearts, when a shout from the bank recalled them.

It was a relief-boat down the river. They had picked up, they said, a man and an infant, nearly exhausted, about two miles below. Did anybody know them, and did they belong here.

It needed but a glance to show them Kentuck lying there, cruelly crushed and bruised, but still holding the Luck of Roaring Camp in his arms. As they bent over the strangely assorted pair, they saw that the child was cold and pulseless. "He is dead," said one. Kentuck opened his eyes. "Dead?" he repeated feebly. "Yes, my man, and you are dying too." A smile lit the eyes of the expiring Kentuck. "Dying," he repeated, "he's a taking me with him,—tell the boys I've got the Luck with me now"; and the strong man, clinging to the frail babe as a drowning man is said to cling to a straw, drifted away into the shadowy river that flows forever to the unknown sea.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What characteristics of the rough life of the old West appear in the first paragraph?
2. What do the later paragraphs add concerning the peculiar characteristics of Roaring Camp?
3. How does Bret Harte make natural scenery contribute to the effectiveness of the story?
4. What shows the somewhat childlike nature of the men of Roaring Camp?
5. What shows the fundamental goodness of the rough miners?
6. How does Bret Harte differentiate Kentuck?
7. Why did the camp adopt the motherless child?
8. Why were the people of Roaring Camp so intensely interested in "the Luck"?
9. Why did Stumpy stop the mock christening?

10. Explain how "the Luck" changed Roaring Camp.
11. How did "the Luck" restore goodness to the hearts of rough men?
12. In what respects is "The Luck of Roaring Camp" an idyllic story?
13. In what respects does the latter part of the story contrast with the earlier part?
14. What different elements make the end of the story pathetic?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"The Luck of Roaring Camp," like *Silas Marner*, has for its theme the fact that children often exert an ennobling influence over the lives of men. The title of each story might be, "A Little Child Shall Lead Them." Into the incredibly rough conditions of a lawless mining camp in the West in its wildest days comes a helpless child. At once the presence of the child stirs in the hearts of men who have not paused even at murder, a sense of tenderness, a desire for gentleness, and a wish to be better. The need of protecting the child leads to unselfish service, to some degree of reform, and at last to self-sacrifice, even to the death. As a background Bret Harte suggests many of the details of the rough days of the early mining camps.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, imagine some one person, or some group of persons, to whom comes a gentle but uplifting force. Make a strong contrast between the conditions before, and after, the coming of the force for good.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. A certain tenement district in a great city is noted for its lawless children. Into that district comes a lame settlement worker. Show how the influence of that one person gradually affects the entire district.
2. Into a region of abandoned farms in the East of the United States comes an aged foreigner, who occupies one of the ruinous buildings on abandoned land, and makes his farm so prosper that he stimulates others to imitate him.
3. A gang of rascally boys in the slums of a great city by accident are led to assume the protection of a feeble old newspaper seller. Show how the protection of the weak old man affects the lives of the members of the gang.
4. Into a tenement-house in which there happen to live a number of men of dangerous criminal tendencies there comes a blind musician, who plays uplifting music, and thus changes the hearts of some of the men.

5. A number of the most unruly and neglectful pupils in a school come under the influence of an inexperienced but keenly sympathetic teacher, whose weakness and whose strength make deep appeal to them.

THE AMBITIOUS GUEST *

By Nathaniel Hawthorne

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864), one of the most artistic of American short-story writers and novelists, was born in Salem, Massachusetts, the son of a New England sea-captain. In his student days in Bowdoin College, Maine, he became a warm friend of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and of Franklin Pierce, one of whom was destined to become the most popular American poet, the other, President of the United States. In various periods of his life Nathaniel Hawthorne served as weigher in the custom-house in Boston, surveyor of the custom-house in Salem, and United States consul at Liverpool, England.

From his youth, Nathaniel Hawthorne found delight in writing, and he spared no pains to make his work excellent, preparing voluminous notes and rewriting many times. He wrote in chaste, poetic style, using much imagery and symbolism, and from a moral point of view reflecting much of the spirit of old New England.

Nathaniel Hawthorne's most important works are as follows: *Twice Told Tales* (1837), *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846), *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), *The House of Seven Gables* (1851), *Tanglewood Tales* (1853), *The Marble Faun* (1860).

ONE September night, a family had gathered round their hearth, and piled it high with the drift-wood of mountain streams, the dry cones of the pine, and the splintered ruins of great trees, that had come crashing down the precipice. Up the chimney roared the fire, and brightened the room with its broad blaze. The faces of the father and mother had a sober gladness; the children laughed; the eldest daughter was the image of happiness at seventeen; and the aged grandmother, who sat knitting in the warmest place, was the image of happiness grown old. They had found the "herb, heart's-ease," in the bleakest spot of all New England. This family

* From *Twice Told Tales,* by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Crawford Notch in the White Mountains. Photo by Irving Galloway, New York.

"They dwelt in a cold spot and a dangerous one."

were situated in the Notch of the White Hills, where the wind was sharp throughout the year, and pitilessly cold in the winter,—giving their cottage all its fresh inclemency, before it descended on the valley of the Saco. They dwelt in a cold spot and a dangerous one; for a mountain towered above their heads, so steep, that the stones would often rumble down its sides, and startle them at midnight.

The daughter had just uttered some simple jest, that filled them all with mirth, when the wind came through the Notch and seemed to pause before their cottage,—rattling the door, with a sound of wailing and lamentation, before it passed into the valley. For a moment, it saddened them, though there was nothing unusual in the tones. But the family were glad again, when they perceived that the latch was lifted by some traveller, whose footsteps had been unheard amid the dreary blast, which heralded his approach, and wailed as he was entering, and went moaning away from the door.

Though they dwelt in such a solitude, these people held daily converse with the world. The romantic pass of the Notch is a great artery, through which the life-blood of internal commerce is continually throbbing, between Maine on one side and the Green Mountains and the shores of the St. Lawrence on the other. The stage-coach always drew up before the door of the cottage. The wayfarer, with no companion but his staff, paused here to exchange a word, that the sense of loneliness might not utterly overcome him, ere he could pass through the cleft of the mountain, or reach the first house in the valley. And here the teamster, on his way to Portland market, would put up for the night; and, if a bachelor, might sit an hour beyond the usual bedtime, and steal a kiss from the mountain-maid, at parting. It was one of those primitive taverns, where the traveller pays only for food and lodging, but meets with a homely kindness, beyond all price. When the footsteps were heard, therefore, between the outer door and the inner one, the whole family rose up, grandmother, children, and all, as if about to welcome some one who belonged to them, and whose fate was linked with theirs.

The door was opened by a young man. His face at first wore

the melancholy expression, almost despondency, of one who travels a wild and bleak road, at nightfall and alone, but soon brightened up, when he saw the kindly warmth of his reception. He felt his heart spring forward to meet them all, from the old woman, who wiped a chair with her apron, to the little child that held out its arms to him. One glance and smile placed the stranger on a footing of innocent familiarity with the eldest daughter.

"Ah, this fire is the right thing!" cried he; "especially when there is such a pleasant circle round it. I am quite benumbed; for the Notch is just like the pipe of a great pair of bellows, it has blown a terrible blast in my face, all the way from Bartlett."

"Then you are going toward Vermont?" said the master of the house, as he helped to take a light knapsack off the young man's shoulders.

"Yes; to Burlington, and far enough beyond," replied he. "I meant to have been at Ethan Crawford's to-night; but a pedestrian lingers along such a road as this. It is no matter; for, when I saw this good fire, and all your cheerful faces, I felt, as if you had kindled it on purpose for me, and were waiting my arrival. So I shall sit down among you, and make myself at home."

The frank-hearted stranger had just drawn his chair to the fire, when something like a heavy footstep was heard without, rushing down the steep side of the mountain, as with long and rapid strides, and taking such a leap, in passing the cottage, as to strike the opposite precipice. The family held their breath, because they knew the sound, and their guest held his, by instinct.

"The old mountain has thrown a stone at us, for fear we should forget him," said the landlord, recovering himself. "He sometimes nods his head, and threatens to come down; but we are old neighbors, and agree together pretty well, upon the whole. Besides, we have a sure place of refuge, hard by, if he should be coming in good earnest."

Let us now suppose the stranger to have finished his supper of bear's meat; and, by his natural felicity of manner, to have

placed himself on a footing of kindness with the whole family, so that they talked as freely together, as if he belonged to their mountain brood. He was of a proud, yet gentle spirit,—haughty and reserved among the rich and great; but ever ready to stoop his head to the lowly cottage door, and be like a brother or a son at the poor man's fireside. In the household of the Notch, he found warmth and simplicity of feeling, the pervading intelligence of New England, and a poetry of native growth, which they had gathered, when they little thought of it, from the mountain peaks and chasms, and at the very threshold of their romantic and dangerous abode. He had travelled far and alone; his whole life, indeed, had been a solitary path: for, with the lofty caution of his nature, he had kept himself apart from those who might otherwise have been his companions. The family, too, though so kind and hospitable, had that consciousness of unity among themselves, and separation from the world at large, which, in every domestic circle, should still keep a holy place, where no stranger may intrude. But, this evening, a prophetic sympathy impelled the refined and educated youth to pour out his heart before the simple mountaineers, and constrained them to answer him with the same free confidence. And thus it should have been. Is not the kindred of a common fate a closer tie than that of birth?

The secret of the young man's character was, a high and abstracted ambition. He could have borne to live an undistinguished life, but not to be forgotten in the grave. Yearning desire had been transformed to hope; and hope, long cherished, had become like certainty, that, obscurely as he journeyed now, a glory was to beam on all his pathway,—though not, perhaps, while he was treading it. But, when posterity should gaze back into the gloom of what was now the present, they would trace the brightness of his footsteps, brightening as meaner glories faded, and confess, that a gifted one had passed from his cradle to his tomb, with none to recognize him.

"As yet," cried the stranger, his cheek glowing and his eye flashing with enthusiasm,—"as yet, I have done nothing. Were

I to vanish from the earth to-morrow, none would know so much of me as you; that a nameless youth came up, at nightfall, from the valley of the Saco, and opened his heart to you in the evening, and passed through the Notch, by sunrise, and was seen no more. Not a soul would ask, 'Who was he? Whither did the wanderer go?' But, I cannot die till I have achieved my destiny. Then, let Death come! I shall have built my monument!"

There was a continual flow of natural emotion, gushing forth amid abstracted revery, which enabled the family to understand this young man's sentiments, though so foreign from their own. With quick sensibility of the ludicrous, he blushed at the ardor into which he had been betrayed.

"You laugh at me," said he, taking the eldest daughter's hand, and laughing himself. "You think my ambition as nonsensical as if I were to freeze myself to death on the top of Mount Washington, only that people might spy at me from the country round about. And truly, that would be a noble pedestal for a man's statue!"

"It is better to sit here by this fire," answered the girl, blushing, "and be comfortable and contented, though nobody thinks about us."

"I suppose," said her father, after a fit of musing, "there is something natural in what the young man says; and if my mind had been turned that way, I might have felt just the same. It is strange, wife, how his talk has set my head running on things that are pretty certain never to come to pass."

"Perhaps they may," observed the wife. "Is the man thinking what he will do when he is a widower?"

"No, no!" cried he, repelling the idea with reproachful kindness. "When I think of your death, Esther, I think of mine, too. But I was wishing we had a good farm, in Bartlett, or Bethlehem, or Littleton, or some other township round the White Mountains; but not where they could tumble on our heads. I should want to stand well with my neighbors, and be called Squire, and sent to General Court for a term or two; for a plain, honest man may do as much good there as a lawyer. And when I should be grown quite an old man, and you an old

woman, so as not to be long apart, I might die happy enough in my bed, and leave you all crying around me. A slate gravestone would suit me as well as a marble one,—with just my name and age, and a verse of a hymn, and something to let people know that I lived an honest man and died a Christian."

"There now!" exclaimed the stranger; "it is our nature to desire a monument, be it slate, or marble, or a pillar of granite, or a glorious memory in the universal heart of man."

"We're in a strange way, to-night," said the wife, with tears in her eyes. "They say it's a sign of something, when folks' minds go a wandering so. Hark to the children!"

They listened accordingly. The younger children had been put to bed in another room, but with an open door between, so that they could be heard talking busily among themselves. One and all seemed to have caught the infection from the fireside circle, and were outvying each other in wild wishes and childish projects of what they would do when they came to be men and women. At length, a little boy, instead of addressing his brothers and sisters, called out to his mother.

"I'll tell you what I wish, mother," cried he. "I want you and father and grandma'm, and all of us, and the stranger, too, to start right away, and go and take a drink out of the basin of the Flume!"

Nobody could help laughing at the child's notion of leaving a warm bed, and dragging them from a cheerful fire, to visit the basin of the Flume,—a brook which tumbles over the precipice, deep within the Notch. The boy had hardly spoken, when a wagon rattled along the road, and stopped a moment before the door. It appeared to contain two or three men, who were cheering their hearts with the rough chorus of a song, which resounded, in broken notes, between the cliffs, while the singers hesitated whether to continue their journey, or put up here for the night.

"Father," said the girl, "they are calling you by name."

But the good man doubted whether they had really called him, and was unwilling to show himself too solicitous of gain, by inviting people to patronize his house. He therefore did not hurry to the door; and the lash being soon applied, the

travellers plunged into the Notch, still singing and laughing, though their music and mirth came back drearily from the heart of the mountain.

"There, mother!" cried the boy again. "They'd have given us a ride to the Flume."

Again they laughed at the child's pertinacious fancy for a night ramble. But it happened, that a light cloud passed over the daughter's spirit; she looked gravely into the fire, and drew a breath that was almost a sigh. It forced its way, in spite of a little struggle to repress it. Then starting and blushing, she looked quickly round the circle, as if they had caught a glimpse into her bosom. The stranger asked what she had been thinking of.

"Nothing," answered she with a downcast smile. "Only I felt lonesome just then."

"O, I have always had a gift of feeling what is in other people's hearts!" said he, half seriously. "Shall I tell the secrets of yours? For I know what to think, when a young girl shivers by a warm hearth, and complains of lonesomeness at her mother's side. Shall I put these feelings into words?"

"They would not be a girl's feelings any longer, if they could be put into words," replied the mountain nymph, laughing, but avoiding his eye.

All this was said apart. Perhaps a germ of love was springing in their hearts, so pure that it might blossom in Paradise, since it could not be matured on earth; for women worship such gentle dignity as his; and the proud, contemplative, yet kindly soul is oftenest captivated by simplicity like hers. But, while they spoke softly, and he was watching the happy sadness, the lightsome shadows, the sly yearnings of a maiden's nature, the wind, through the Notch, took a deeper and drearier sound. It seemed, as the fanciful stranger said, like the choral strain of the spirits of the blast, who, in old Indian times, had their dwelling among these mountains, and made their heights and recesses a sacred region. There was a wail, along the road, as if a funeral were passing. To chase away the gloom, the family threw pine branches on their fire, till the dry leaves crackled and the flame arose, discovering once

again a scene of peace and humble happiness. The light hovered about them fondly, and caressed them all. There were the little faces of the children, peeping from their bed apart, and here the father's frame of strength, the mother's subdued and careful mien, the high-browed youth, the budding girl, and the good old grandam, still knitting in the warmest place. The aged woman looked up from her task, and, with fingers ever busy, was the next to speak.

"Old folks have their notions," said she, "as well as young ones. You've been wishing and planning; and letting your heads run on one thing and another, till you've set my mind a wandering too. Now what should an old woman wish for, when she can go but a step or two before she comes to her grave? Children, it will haunt me night and day till I tell you."

"What is it, mother?" cried the husband and wife, at once.

Then the old woman, with an air of mystery, which drew the circle closer round the fire, informed them that she had provided her graveclothes some years before,—a nice linen shroud, a cap with a muslin ruff, and everything of a finer sort than she had worn since her wedding day. But, this evening, an old superstition had strangely recurred to her. It used to be said, in her younger days, that, if anything were amiss with a corpse, if only the ruff were not smooth, or the cap did not set right, the corpse, in the coffin and beneath the clods, would strive to put up its cold hands and arrange it. The bare thought made her nervous.

"Don't talk so, grandmother!" said the girl, shuddering.

"Now," continued the old woman, with singular earnestness, yet smiling strangely at her own folly, "I want one of you, my children,—when your mother is dressed and in her coffin,—I want one of you to hold a looking-glass over my face. Who knows but I may take a glimpse at myself, and see whether all's right?"

"Old and young, we dream of graves and monuments," murmured the stranger youth. "I wonder how mariners feel, when the ship is sinking, and they, unknown and undistinguished, are to be buried together in the ocean,—that wide and nameless sepulchre?"

For a moment, the old woman's ghastly conception so engrossed the minds of her hearers, that a sound abroad in the night, rising like the roar of a blast, had grown broad, deep, and terrible, before the fated group were conscious of it. The house, and all within it, trembled; the foundations of the earth seemed to be shaken, as if this awful sound were the peal of the last trump. Young and old exchanged one wild glance, and remained an instant, pale, affrighted, without utterance, or power to move. Then the same shriek burst simultaneously from all their lips:

"The Slide! The Slide!"

The simplest words must intimate, but not portray, the unutterable horror of the catastrophe. The victims rushed from their cottage, and sought refuge in what they deemed a safer spot,—where, in contemplation of such an emergency, a sort of barrier had been reared. Alas! they had quitted their security, and fled right into the pathway of destruction. Down came the whole side of the mountain, in a cataract of ruin. Just before it reached the house, the stream broke into two branches, —shivered not a window there, but overwhelmed the whole vicinity, blocked up the road, and annihilated everything in its dreadful course. Long ere the thunder of that great Slide had ceased to roar among the mountains, the mortal agony had been endured, and the victims were at peace. Their bodies were never found.

The next morning, the light smoke was seen stealing from the cottage chimney, up the mountain-side. Within, the fire was yet smouldering on the hearth, and the chairs in a circle round it, as if the inhabitants had but gone forth to view the devastation of the Slide, and would shortly return, to thank Heaven for their miraculous escape. All had left separate tokens, by which those who had known the family were made to shed a tear for each. Who has not heard their name? The story has been told far and wide, and will forever be a legend of these mountains. Poets have sung their fate.

There were circumstances which led some to suppose that a stranger had been received into the cottage on this awful night, and had shared the catastrophe of all its inmates.

Others denied that there were sufficient grounds for such a conjecture. Woe, for the high-souled youth, with his dream of earthly immortality! His name and person utterly unknown; his history, his way of life, his plans, a mystery never to be solved; his death and his existence equally a doubt! Whose was the agony of that death moment?

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. How does the happiness of the family contrast with the place in which the home is situated?
2. What types of human life does the story symbolize?
3. Throughout the story, point out suggestions of coming disaster.
4. How does the mountain inn differ from ordinary inns?
5. What advantages does the author gain by setting his story in a real, rather than in an imaginary, place?
6. Comment on the character of the stranger.
7. What is the stranger's ambition?
8. What is the father's ambition?
9. Throughout the story, point out local allusions.
10. What is the grandmother's ambition?
11. How does the author prepare the reader for the final catastrophe?
12. What effect is produced on the reader by the statement that the house itself escaped destruction?
13. Do any members of the household fulfil their ambitions?
14. In what respects does the story symbolize human life?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"The Ambitious Guest" is a symbolic story, suggesting that human ambitions, of whatever kind, are likely to be thwarted. Even the persons in the story are symbols, representing childhood, youth, middle age, and old age. The ambitions suggested are the whimsical wishes of children, the commonplace desires of ordinary people, and the lofty aspirations of one who seeks high fame. All alike are overwhelmed by death. In a sense the story presents the inexorable fate that overhangs all mankind. The setting, in the Crawford Notch of the White Mountains, gives poetic symbolism a kind of earthly reality.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, think first of all of an idea that you wish your story to convey. Invent characters that will represent different types of life, as seen in relation with the thought you intend to emphasize. Place the story in an actual setting. Through-

out the narrative, give strong hints of the coming of the event that will close the story.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. Present a group of people talking in pessimistic mood in expectation of disaster from fire, or war, or famine, or loss at sea. Let the story end unexpectedly and happily. Show that sometimes all things work together for good.
2. Present a group of people talking about their wishes for the future. Throughout your story, prepare the reader for a reasonable fulfilment of every wish made, but for a fulfilment far beyond any desire expressed. Show that sometimes blessings far exceed wishes.
3. The members of an athletic team plan their games for the coming season. Every person who speaks so reveals his character that the reader gains hints of the results of the season's work. The conclusion of the story is a triumphant but somewhat unexpected victory. Show that "Practice makes perfect."
4. A group of pupils in a school plan their lives for the future. Throughout the story suggest something that will overwhelm every plan, such as local conditions, poverty, or the coming of war. Show every plan totally unfulfilled. Show that man is not always the master of his fate.
5. Imagine a group of animals on a farm—pigs, cows, calves, sheep, lambs, turkeys, geese, hens and chickens—talking about their lives and their happy expectations. Throughout the story suggest a coming family reunion at the farmhouse, with the necessity of preparing a great amount of food for the occasion. Show the various animals overwhelmed by stern fate. Show that "The best laid plans o' mice and men gang aft a-gley."

THE RANSOM OF RED CHIEF*

By O. Henry

O. Henry (William Sydney Porter, 1862–1910), one of the most popular of American short-story writers, was born in Greensboro, North Carolina. After attending school for only a short time, he became clerk in a drug-store. Ill health drove him to Texas, where he worked for a time as bookkeeper and then as bank teller. In 1896 and 1897 he spent many months in Honduras. During his last eight years he lived in New York City. O. Henry drifted gradually into his brilliant short-story writing, contributing first to newspapers in Texas, and later contracting with the *New York World* to write a story every week.

O. Henry looked at life with amused and sympathetic eyes, saw its little comedies and tragedies, and in colloquial, breezy manner, with slight regard for convention, wrote stories closely based upon his varied observations in Texas, Honduras, and New York City. He delighted in surprising his readers by carefully leading his plots to most unexpected but firmly based conclusions. His stories radiate good humor and show keen sympathy with many types of life.

O. Henry's collected stories appear in the following volumes: *Cabbages and Kings* (1904), *The Four Million* (1906), *The Trimmed Lamp* (1907), *The Heart of the West* (1907), *The Gentle Grafter* (1908), *The Voice of the City* (1908), *Roads of Destiny* (1909), *Options* (1909), *Whirligigs* (1910), *Strictly Business* (1910), *Sixes and Sevens* (1912), *Wasps and Stings* (1917).

IT looked like a good thing; but wait till I tell you. We were down South, in Alabama—Bill Driscoll and myself—when this kidnapping idea struck us. It was, as Bill afterward expressed it, "during a moment of temporary mental apparition"; but we didn't find that out till later.

There was a town down there, as flat as a flannel-cake, and

* From *Whirligigs*, by O. Henry, copyright, 1907, by Doubleday, Page and Company, and reprinted by special permission of Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc, Publishers.

called Summit, of course. It contained inhabitants of as undeleterious and self-satisfied a class of peasantry as ever clustered around a Maypole.

Bill and me had a joint capital of about six hundred dollars, and we needed just two thousand dollars more to pull off a fraudulent town-lot scheme in Western Illinois with. We talked it over on the front steps of the hotel. Philoprogenitiveness, says we, is strong in semirural communities; therefore, and for other reasons, a kidnapping project ought to do better there than in the radius of newspapers that send reporters out in plain clothes to stir up talk about such things. We knew that Summit couldn't get after us with anything stronger than constables and, maybe, some lackadaisical bloodhounds and a diatribe or two in the *Weekly Farmers' Budget*. So, it looked good.

We selected for our victim the only child of a prominent citizen named Ebenezer Dorset. The father was respectable and tight, a mortgage fancier and a stern, upright collection-plate passer and forecloser. The kid was a boy of ten, with bas-relief freckles, and hair the color of the cover of the magazine you buy at the news-stand when you want to catch a train. Bill and me figured that Ebenezer would melt down for a ransom of two thousand dollars to a cent. But wait till I tell you.

About two miles from Summit was a little mountain, covered with a dense cedarbrake. On the rear elevation of this mountain was a cave. There we stored provisions.

One evening after sundown we drove in a buggy past old Dorset's house. The kid was in the street, throwing rocks at a kitten on the opposite fence.

"Hey, little boy!" says Bill, "would you like to have a bag of candy and a nice ride?"

The boy catches Bill neatly in the eye with a piece of brick.

"That will cost the old man an extra five hundred dollars," says Bill, climbing over the wheel.

That boy put up a fight like a welter-weight cinnamon bear; but, at last, we got him down in the bottom of the buggy and drove away. We took him up to the cave, and I hitched the

horse in the cedarbrake. After dark I drove the buggy to the little village, three miles away, where we had hired it, and walked back to the mountain.

Bill was pasting court-plaster over the scratches and bruises on his features. There was a fire burning behind the big rock at the entrance of the cave, and the boy was watching a pot of boiling coffee, with two buzzard tail-feathers stuck in his red hair. He points a stick at me when I come up, and says:

"Ha! cursed paleface, do you dare to enter the camp of Red Chief, the terror of the plains?"

"He's all right now," says Bill, rolling up his trousers and examining some bruises on his shins. "We're playing Indian. We're making Buffalo Bill's show look like magic-lantern views of Palestine in the town hall. I'm Old Hank, the Trapper, Red Chief's captive, and I'm to be scalped at daybreak. By Geronimo! that kid can kick hard."

Yes, sir, that boy seemed to be having the time of his life. The fun of camping out in a cave had made him forget that he was a captive himself. He immediately christened me Snake-eye, the Spy, and announced that, when his braves returned from the warpath, I was to be broiled at the stake at the rising of the sun.

Then we had supper; and he filled his mouth full of bacon and bread and gravy, and began to talk. He made a during-dinner speech something like this:

"I like this fine. I never camped out before; but I had a pet 'possum once, and I was nine last birthday. I hate to go to school. Rats ate up sixteen of Jimmy Talbot's aunt's speckled hen's eggs. Are there any real Indians in these woods? I want some more gravy. Does the trees moving make the wind blow? We had five puppies. What makes your nose so red, Hank? My father has lots of money. Are the stars hot? I whipped Ed Walker twice, Saturday. I don't like girls. You dassent catch toads unless with a string. Do oxen make any noise? Why are oranges round? Have you got beds to sleep on in this cave? Amos Murray has got six toes. A parrot can talk, but a monkey or a fish can't. How many does it take to make twelve?"

Every few minutes he would remember that he was a pesky redskin, and pick up his stick rifle and tiptoe to the mouth of the cave to rubber for the scouts of the hated paleface. Now and then he would let out a war-whoop that made Old Hank the Trapper shiver. That boy had Bill terrorized from the start.

"Red Chief," says I to the kid, "would you like to go home?"

"Aw, what for?" says he. "I don't have any fun at home. I hate to go to school. I like to camp out. You won't take me back home again, Snake-eye, will you?"

"Not right away," says I. "We'll stay here in the cave awhile."

"All right!" says he. "That'll be fine. I never had such fun in all my life."

We went to bed about eleven o'clock. We spread down some wide blankets and quilts and put Red Chief between us. We weren't afraid he'd run away. He kept us awake for three hours, jumping up and reaching for his rifle and screeching: "Hist! pard," in mine and Bill's ears, as the fancied crackle of a twig or the rustle of a leaf revealed to his young imagination the stealthy approach of the outlaw band. At last I fell into a troubled sleep, and dreamed that I had been kidnapped and chained to a tree by a ferocious pirate with red hair.

Just at daybreak I was awakened by a series of awful screams from Bill. They weren't yells, or howls, or shouts, or whoops, or yawps, such as you'd expect from a manly set of vocal organs—they were simply indecent, terrifying, humiliating screams, such as women emit when they see ghosts or caterpillars. It's an awful thing to hear a strong, desperate, fat man scream incontinently in a cave at daybreak.

I jumped up to see what the matter was. Red Chief was sitting on Bill's chest, with one hand twined in Bill's hair. In the other he had the sharp case-knife we used for slicing bacon; and he was industriously and realistically trying to take Bill's scalp, according to the sentence that had been pronounced upon him the evening before.

I got the knife away from the kid and made him lie down again. But from that moment Bill's spirit was broken. He laid down on his side of the bed, but he never closed an eye again in sleep as long as that boy was with us. I dozed off for awhile, but along toward sunup I remembered that Red Chief had said I was to be burned at the stake at the rising of the sun. I wasn't nervous or afraid; but I sat up and lit my pipe and leaned against a rock.

"What you getting up so soon for, Sam?" asked Bill.

"Me?" says I. "Oh, I got a kind of a pain in my shoulder. I thought sitting up would rest it."

"You're a liar!" says Bill. "You're afraid. You was to be burned at sunrise, and you was afraid he'd do it. And he would, too, if he could find a match. Ain't it awful, Sam? Do you think anybody will pay out money to get a little imp like that back home?"

"Sure," said I. "A rowdy kid like that is just the kind that parents dote on. Now, you and the Chief get up and cook breakfast, while I go up on the top of this mountain and reconnoitre."

I went up on the peak of the little mountain and ran my eye over the contiguous vicinity. Over toward Summit I expected to see the sturdy yeomanry of the village armed with scythes and pitchforks beating the countryside for the dastardly kidnappers. But what I saw was a peaceful landscape dotted with one man ploughing with a dun mule. Nobody was dragging the creek; no couriers dashed hither and yon, bringing tidings of no news to the distracted parents. There was a sylvan attitude of somnolent sleepiness pervading that section of the external outward surface of Alabama that lay exposed to my view. "Perhaps," says I to myself, "it has not yet been discovered that the wolves have borne away the tender lambkin from the fold. Heaven help the wolves!" says I, and I went down the mountain to breakfast.

When I got to the cave I found Bill backed up against the side of it, breathing hard, and the boy threatening to smash him with a rock half as big as a cocoanut.

"He put a red-hot boiled potato down my back," explained

Bill, "and then mashed it with his foot; and I boxed his ears. Have you got a gun about you, Sam?"

I took the rock away from the boy and kind of patched up the argument. "I'll fix you," says the kid to Bill. "No man ever yet struck the Red Chief but what he got paid for it. You better beware!"

After breakfast the kid takes a piece of leather with strings wrapped around it out of his pocket and goes outside the cave unwinding it.

"What's he up to now?" says Bill anxiously. "You don't think he'll run away, do you, Sam?"

"No fear of it," says I. "He don't seem to be much of a home body. But we've got to fix up some plan about the ransom. There don't seem to be much excitement around Summit on account of his disappearance: but maybe they haven't realized yet that he's gone. His folks may think he's spending the night with Aunt Jane or one of the neighbors. Anyhow, he'll be missed to-day. To-night we must get a message to his father demanding the two thousand dollars for his return."

Just then we heard a kind of war-whoop, such as David might have emitted when he knocked out the champion Goliath. It was a sling that Red Chief had pulled out of his pocket, and he was whirling it around his head.

I dodged, and heard a heavy thud and a kind of a sigh from Bill, like a horse gives out when you take his saddle off. A niggerhead rock the size of an egg had caught Bill just behind his left ear. He loosened himself all over and fell in the fire across the frying pan of hot water for washing the dishes. I dragged him out and poured cold water on his head for half an hour.

By and by, Bill sits up and feels behind his ear and says: "Sam, do you know who my favorite Biblical character is?"

"Take it easy," says I. "You'll come to your senses presently."

"King Herod," says he. "You won't go away and leave me here alone, will you, Sam?"

I went out and caught that boy and shook him until his freckles rattled.

"If you don't behave," says I, "I'll take you straight home. Now, are you going to be good, or not?"

"I was only funning," says he sullenly. "I didn't mean to hurt Old Hank. But what did he hit me for? I'll behave, Snake-eye, if you won't send me home, and if you'll let me play the Black Scout to-day."

"I don't know the game," says I. "That's for you and Mr. Bill to decide. He's your playmate for the day. I'm going away for a while, on business. Now, you come in and make friends with him and say you are sorry for hurting him, or home you go, at once."

I made him and Bill shake hands, and then I took Bill aside and told him I was going to Poplar Cove, a little village three miles from the cave, and find out what I could about how the kidnapping had been regarded in Summit. Also, I thought it best to send a peremptory letter to old man Dorset that day, demanding the ransom and dictating how it should be paid.

"You know, Sam," says Bill, "I've stood by you without batting an eye in earthquakes, fire, and flood—in poker games, dynamite outrages, police raids, train robberies, and cyclones. I never lost my nerve yet till we kidnapped that two-legged skyrocket of a kid. He's got me going. You won't leave me long with him, will you, Sam?"

"I'll be back some time this afternoon," says I. "You must keep the boy amused and quiet till I return. And now we'll write the letter to old Dorset."

Bill and I got paper and pencil and worked on the letter while Red Chief, with a blanket wrapped around him, strutted up and down, guarding the mouth of the cave. Bill begged me tearfully to make the ransom fifteen hundred dollars instead of two thousand. "I ain't attempting," says he, "to decry the celebrated moral aspect of parental affection, but we're dealing with humans, and it ain't human for anybody to give up two thousand dollars for that forty-pound chunk of freckled wildcat. I'm willing to take a chance at fifteen hundred dollars. You can charge the difference up to me."

So, to relieve Bill, I acceded, and we collaborated a letter that ran this way:

EBENEZER DORSET, ESQ.:

We have your boy concealed in a place far from Summit. It is useless for you or the most skilful detectives to attempt to find him. Absolutely, the only terms on which you can have him restored to you are these: We demand fifteen hundred dollars in large bills for his return: the money to be left at midnight to-night at the same spot and in the same box as your reply—as hereinafter described. If you agree to these terms, send your answer in writing by a solitary messenger to-night at half-past eight o'clock. After crossing Owl Creek, on the road to Poplar Cove, there are three large trees about a hundred yards apart, close to the fence of the wheat field on the right-hand side. At the bottom of the fence-post, opposite the third tree, will be found a small pasteboard box.

The messenger will place the answer in this box and return immediately to Summit.

If you attempt any treachery or fail to comply with our demand as stated, you will never see your boy again.

If you pay the money as demanded, he will be returned to you safe and well within three hours. These terms are final, and if you do not accede to them no further communication will be attempted.

TWO DESPERATE MEN.

I addressed this letter to Dorset, and put it in my pocket. As I was about to start, the kid comes up to me and says:

"Aw, Snake-eye, you said I could play the Black Scout while you was gone."

"Play it, of course," says I. "Mr. Bill will play with you. What kind of a game is it?"

"I'm the Black Scout," says Red Chief, "and I have to ride to the stockade to warn the settlers that the Indians are coming. I'm tired of playing Indian myself. I want to be the Black Scout."

"All right," says I. "It sounds harmless to me. I guess Mr. Bill will help you foil the pesky savages."

"What am I to do?" asks Bill, looking at the kid suspiciously.

"You are the hoss," says Black Scout. "Get down on your hands and knees. How can I ride to the stockade without a hoss?"

"You'd better keep him interested," said I, "till we get the scheme going. Loosen up."

Bill gets down on his all fours, and a look comes in his eye like a rabbit's when you catch it in a trap.

"How far is it to the stockade, kid?" he asks, in a husky manner of voice.

"Ninety miles," says the Black Scout. "And you have to hump yourself to get there on time. Whoa, now!"

The Black Scout jumps on Bill's back and digs his heels in his side.

"For Heaven's sake," says Bill, "hurry back, Sam, as soon as you can. I wish we hadn't made the ransom more than a thousand. Say, you quit kicking me or I'll get up and warm you good."

I walked over to Poplar Cove and sat around the post office and store, talking with the chawbacons that came in to trade. One whiskerando says that he hears Summit is all upset on account of Elder Ebenezer Dorset's boy having been lost or stolen. That was all I wanted to know. I bought some smoking tobacco, referred casually to the price of black-eyed peas, posted my letter surreptitiously, and came away. The postmaster said the mail-carrier would come by in an hour to take the mail on to Summit.

When I got back to the cave Bill and the boy were not to be found. I explored the vicinity of the cave, and risked a yodel or two, but there was no response.

So I lighted my pipe and sat down on a mossy bank to wait developments.

In about half an hour I heard the bushes rustle, and Bill wabbled out into the little glade in front of the cave. Behind him was the kid, stepping softly like a scout, with a broad grin on his face. Bill stopped, took off his hat, and wiped his face with a red handkerchief. The kid stopped about eight feet behind him.

"Sam," says Bill, "I suppose you'll think I'm a renegade, but I couldn't help it. I'm a grown person with masculine proclivities and habits of self-defense, but there is a time when

all systems of egotism and predominance fail. The boy is gone. I have sent him home. All is off. There was martyrs in old times," goes on Bill, "that suffered death rather than give up the particular graft they enjoyed. None of 'em ever was subjugated to such supernatural tortures as I have been. I tried to be faithful to our articles of depredation; but there came a limit."

"What's the trouble, Bill?" I asks him.

"I was rode," says Bill, "the ninety miles to the stockade, not barring an inch. Then, when the settlers was rescued, I was given oats. Sand ain't a palatable substitute. And then, for an hour I had to try to explain to him why there was nothin' in holes, how a road can run both ways, and what makes the grass green. I tell you, Sam, a human can only stand so much. I takes him by the neck of his clothes and drags him down the mountain. On the way he kicks my legs black-and-blue from the knees down; and I've got to have two or three bites on my thumb and hand cauterized."

"But he's gone"—continues Bill—"gone home. I showed him the road to Summit and kicked him about eight feet nearer there at one kick. I'm sorry we lost the ransom; but it was either that or Bill Driscoll to the madhouse."

Bill is puffing and blowing, but there is a look of ineffable peace and growing content on his rose-pink features.

"Bill," says I, "there isn't any heart disease in your family, is there?"

"No," says Bill, "nothing chronic except malaria and accidents. Why?"

"Then you might turn around," says I, "and have a look behind you."

Bill turns and sees the boy, and loses his complexion and sits down plump on the ground and begins to pluck aimlessly at grass and little sticks. For an hour I was afraid of his mind. And then I told him that my scheme was to put the whole job through immediately and that we would get the ransom and be off with it by midnight if old Dorset fell in with our proposition. So Bill braced up enough to give the kid a weak sort of a smile and a promise to play the Russian

in a Japanese war with him as soon as he felt a little better.

I had a scheme for collecting that ransom without danger of being caught by counterplots that ought to commend itself to professional kidnappers. The tree under which the answer was to be left—and the money later on—was close to the road fence with big, bare fields on all sides. If a gang of constables should be watching for any one to come for the note they could see him a long way off crossing the fields or in the road. But no, sirree! At half-past eight I was up in that tree as well hidden as a tree toad, waiting for the messenger to arrive.

Exactly on time, a half-grown boy rides up the road on a bicycle, locates the pasteboard box at the foot of the fence-post, slips a folded piece of paper into it and pedals away again back toward Summit.

I waited an hour and then concluded the thing was square. I slid down the tree, got the note, slipped along the fence till I struck the woods, and was back at the cave in another half an hour. I opened the note, got near the lantern and read it to Bill. It was written with a pen in a crabbed hand, and the sum and substance of it was this:

Two Desperate Men.

Gentlemen: I received your letter to-day by post, in regard to the ransom you ask for the return of my son. I think you are a little high in your demands, and I hereby make you a counter-proposition, which I am inclined to believe you will accept. You bring Johnny home and pay me two hundred and fifty dollars in cash, and I agree to take him off your hands. You had better come at night, for the neighbors believe he is lost, and I couldn't be responsible for what they would do to anybody they saw bringing him back.

Very respectfully,
Ebenezer Dorset.

"Great pirates of Penzance!" says I; "of all the impudent—"

But I glanced at Bill, and hesitated. He had the most appealing look in his eyes I ever saw on the face of a dumb or talking brute.

"Sam," says he, "what's two hundred and fifty dollars, after all? We've got the money. One more night of this kid will send me to a bed in Bedlam. Besides being a thorough gentleman, I think Mr. Dorset is a spendthrift for making us such a liberal offer. You ain't going to let the chance go, are you?"

"Tell you the truth, Bill," says I, "this little he ewe lamb has somewhat got on my nerves, too. We'll take him home, pay the ransom, and make our get-away."

We took him home that night. We got him to go by telling him that his father had bought a silver-mounted rifle and a pair of moccasins for him, and we were going to hunt for bears the next day.

It was just twelve o'clock when we knocked at Ebenezer's front door. Just at the moment when I should have been abstracting the fifteen hundred dollars from the box under the tree, according to the original proposition, Bill was counting out two hundred and fifty dollars into Dorset's hand.

When the kid found out we were going to leave him at home he started up a howl like a calliope and fastened himself as tight as a leech to Bill's leg. His father peeled him away gradually, like a porous plaster.

"How long can you hold him?" asks Bill.

"I'm not as strong as I used to be," says old Dorset, "but I think I can promise you ten minutes."

"Enough," says Bill. "In ten minutes I shall cross the Central, Southern, and Middle Western States, and be legging it trippingly for the Canadian border."

And, as dark as it was, and as fat as Bill was, and as good a runner as I am, he was a good mile and a half out of Summit before I could catch up with him.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Who tells the story? Under what circumstances does he tell it?
2. What gives humor to the language of the story?
3. Point out three important divisions of the narrative.
4. Point out numerous details that show the character of the boy.
5. What makes the events of the story humorous?

6. Point out various places in the story where the author prepares the reader for the surprising conclusion.
7. What were the causes of Red Chief's astonishing behavior
8. Make a list of all incidents that have part in the story.
9. How does the letter from Ebenezer Dorset differ from the letter that the men had expected?
10. In what respects is the story the opposite of all ordinary kidnapping stories?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

When O. Henry sat down to write "The Ransom of Red Chief," he must have thought first of the last paragraph that he would write, that is, of the end of the story. He chose to make that ending a surprise to the reader. In the course of the story he narrated striking incidents, using humorous exaggerations and odd twists of language. Altogether he wrote most originally and most humorously. He pleases the reader especially by the surprise of the conclusion, for which he made such careful preparation.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, think of any ordinary event and of its normal conclusion; then write a story that will tell about such an event but that will have a conclusion almost the exact opposite of the normal. In writing "The Ransom of Red Chief," O. Henry must have said to himself: "Kidnappers steal children; they demand ransom from the parents. In my story kidnappers will steal a child, but the parents will demand payment before they will take the child back." In a similar way, invent a plot that will end in a manner opposite to the usual. Invent suitable characters and a series of illustrative incidents. Write in any style that will be appropriate, humorously if the subject is humorous; seriously if the subject is serious.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. A pupil in school intentionally neglects all school work, and expects severe punishment. By a series of accidents he gains high honors in scholarship.
2. A boy, with considerable real courage, braves what appears to be great danger and gives an alarm, thinking that he will be called a hero. Instead, he finds himself the subject of good-natured laughter.
3. A young person plans an April-fool joke on another. Instead of succeeding, he finds himself badly fooled.

4. A rascal tries to deceive and cheat a countryman. In the end he finds himself badly deceived and cheated.
5. A man sells for what he thinks an unreasonably high price, land that he thinks worthless. To his surprise he learns that the land he sold has immense value.

ON THE DARK TRAIL *

By Franklin Holt

"Franklin Holt" is the pen-name of Russell Miers Coryell, who was born in Cornwall, New York, in 1891. After his student days in Harvard University, he served as staff writer for various periodicals. He has been a frequent contributor to the *Century Magazine, Scribner's Monthly, St. Nicholas,* and other publications. He resides in Maine.

CYRUS TUTTLE and his six-year-old son, Henry, stood in front of the tiger's cage at the country circus and watched the striped beast pace back and forth feverishly on his padded paws. It was feeding-time, and the odor of raw meat had already reached the ravenous animals, as evidenced by their noisy roaring.

The lithe black-and-yellow body of the big Bengal tiger quivered with impatience. The tail switched from side to side and the big, glaring eyes fixed the door by which the raw meat must enter. At that moment he symbolized the ferocity of hunger.

Cyrus Tuttle felt his son's hand tighten in his, and looking down at the sensitive, mobile face he saw it fascinated—eyes big as if hypnotized, cheeks pale with repressed emotion.

The boy wasn't in the circus tent at all but far away in the tangled jungle with the savage, striped beast barring his path —snarling and showing its teeth; and Henry's small back was running cold. Something of this reached Cyrus Tuttle and he would have moved on but Henry held back, unwilling to leave yet.

"Daddy, wait!" he begged. His voice was tense as he struggled to get back from the fancied jungle and be normal, but he couldn't quite shake off the mystery and fascination of the

* From *Scribner's Magazine,* copyright, 1928, by Charles Scribner's Sons. Reprinted by special permission of Franklin Holt, and of Charles Scribner's Sons.

wild. "Daddy," he said nervously, "daddy, he couldn't get out, could he? Not even if he really tried?"

"No, son, he couldn't," Cyrus Tuttle assured him.

"Iron bars are strong, aren't they, daddy? They make them strong so the animals can't get out, don't they?"

"Yes, they do. They are very strong."

"Stronger even than tigers?" Henry's eyes were still big and the demand was made breathlessly.

"Yes, son." Again Cyrus Tuttle tried to move on but Henry held back. He felt his father's reluctance to discuss tigers, and his next question was asked almost apologetically—a cajoling smile on his lips, as if to tell his father that he asked it not through fear but just for "make-believe."

"If he *did* get out, daddy, what would he do?"

Behind them a boy of thirteen heard the question and it fired his imagination.

"Oh, boy!" he spoke up enthusiastically. "What would he do? One big jump right into the crowd with those claws of his! Rip! Bang! He'd tear 'em up all right! Look at those big, yellow teeth! Say! If you ever got your head between those jaws!"

Cyrus Tuttle felt Henry's hand clutch his and grow moist with sudden perspiration as the village boy's vivid words pictured the tiger's escape. Wheeling sharply he silenced the graphic description with a stern look at the boy and then spoke very emphatically to Henry.

"But he *can't* get out, Henry! The cages are too strong. He *can't*—so why talk about it?" Then in a brisk and cheerful tone he said they better hurry along to the main tent lest they miss some of the real circus.

But being pulled away from the animals couldn't banish from Henry's mind the image of the great black-and-yellow-striped beast as it broke through the bars of its cage and leaped into the crowd with yellow fangs bared—spreading panic as it struck right and left with its terrible claws. He was still thinking about it that night at supper as his parents discovered by an abrupt question.

"Daddy, what do tigers eat when they are wild?" And Cy-

rus Tuttle told him that he supposed they ate deer and antelope.

"Raw, daddy, with blood on them?"

"Yes," his father admitted, "I suppose they do."

"Do they ever eat men, daddy, and little boys?" The pupils of Henry's eyes began to dilate with the fascination of the gruesome topic. Cyrus Tuttle saw that and his reply was reluctant.

"Why, son," he said, "*some* tigers are supposed *sometimes* to eat men if they can't eat anything else; but of course there aren't any tigers in America. You needn't think about that sort of thing at all."

"Where do circuses get them, daddy?"

"In India."

"Is India far from here?"

"Way, way across the ocean," Cyrus Tuttle assured him. "They couldn't possibly get to America even if they wanted to."

"Don't we have any bad animals in America, daddy?"

"Not around here."

"Not even up in the mountains at High-Meadow Lake where we're going camping?" Henry insisted.

"No, nothing. Absolutely nothing!" Cyrus Tuttle said emphatically. "And you've got to stop this business of frightening yourself with talk about imaginary animals or I shall have to refuse to take you at all. I don't want a 'fraid-cat' boy on a camping trip with me."

"All right, daddy. I'm not afraid, really. I just like to know things." Henry looked very subdued. His big eyes were troubled as he looked at his father. "You'll let me go, won't you, daddy?" And Cyrus Tuttle smiled quickly.

"Of course I will when my boy talks like that. I thought we would start tomorrow morning early."

"Oh-h-h!" cried Henry eagerly. "Tomorrow!" His face was alight with joy. "And can I take my knife and my hatchet?"

"You certainly may," his father told him.

"And we'll make griddle-cakes and fry bacon and catch

fish and do all our own cooking?'' His face was shining bright.

''Yes,'' agreed Cyrus Tuttle, delighting in his enthusiasm.

''And sleep on the ground like Indians, and get up early?''

''Yes.''

''And can I sleep with my hatchet and my knife beside me?'' Henry demanded. Then his face fell with abrupt shyness as he caught the indulgent smile exchanged by his father and mother. With quick deprecation he added: ''Just for fun, daddy—not because I'm afraid.''

''All right. You may do anything you want to.''

''May I, mother?'' Henry looked doubtfully at the latter, for he had learned that she was less given to free-handed permissions of that sort. ''And may I light fires and put wood on?''

''You may if your father is there,'' agreed Alice Tuttle cautiously.

''Oh, daddy! Won't it be fun! And mother can't come because she is a girl and wouldn't like it. She'd be afraid of spiders, wouldn't she?'' There was both triumphant superiority and regret in his voice.

''We must walk all the way there,'' his father stipulated, ''and each one carry his pack.''

''All right, daddy. How far will it be?'' The reply was sturdy.

''It's about six miles up the mountains to High-Meadow Lake,'' Cyrus Tuttle calculated. ''Do you think you can walk that far?''

''You'll let me sit down and rest, won't you, daddy?''

''Yes,'' agreed his father, ''but there is to be no turning back once we start. You've got to be a man.''

''All right. And will we carry a tent?''

''Yes. We may stay there four or five days. It all depends on how good a camper you are—how much of a man. No 'fraid-cats' on this trip. Remember that.''

''I know,'' Henry answered stoutly.

So next morning early they started, each with his pack strapped to his shoulders—Henry with his little ten-cent

hatchet gripped in his hand. Alice Tuttle followed them to the gate.

"Good-by, mother," Henry said in a very brave voice, the braver perhaps to conceal a sudden trepidation that swept over him at the last minute—perhaps also because in his mother's eyes he had caught the glisten of tears. "Good-by."

"Good-by, precious. Be mother's big boy—and careful not to cut yourself."

"I won't."

Then they were really off—passing the circus grounds on their way. The big tents had disappeared in the night. Just a few last circus trucks with gilded woodwork were still on the grounds. Henry looked in surprise.

"Where have they gone to, daddy?"

"Gone to another town. They pack up at night and move early in the morning. I suppose if we should go down to the railroad-station we would find their special circus train getting ready to leave."

"Do they put the animals on the train, daddy?"

"Yes."

"In their cages?"

"I suppose so. I have never seen them loaded."

"Oh." Henry's mind was immediately busy with the probable method of loading wild animals on to trains. There were no more questions until they had reached the foot-hills of the mountain and had begun to go up the old wood trail that led to High-Meadow Lake. Then he asked:

"Do you know the way, daddy?"

"Just follow the trail straight along."

"You couldn't get lost in the mountains, could you?"

"Not very well," Cyrus Tuttle told him. "All you have to do is keep on the wood road all the time—and if you go downhill it will take you home."

"I wouldn't be afraid if I were lost," Henry announced.

"That's right. Never be afraid. Always keep cool and use your head. You won't get lost if you do."

"I know."

Silence for a while as they went up the steep trail. Sometimes, from the habit of home, Henry's hand sought his father's, but then it loosed itself again and the boy walked sturdily alone—eyes flitting here and there, ears listening to forest noises. He was back in the mysterious jungles of India again, looking for tigers. His ten-cent hatchet was gripped tight.

"Daddy," he hazarded after a time, "daddy, would you be afraid of a tiger if you met him in the woods?" And Cyrus Tuttle laughed good-naturedly.

"Well, son, I suppose I would be—but there aren't any tigers to be afraid of."

"What would you do if you *did* meet one and he came for you?"

"I don't know," said his father. "I suppose I would try to get out of his way. Maybe I would build a fire. I think tigers are afraid of fire."

"Would they be afraid of a 'lectric flash-light like yours, daddy?"

"Well, I think they might if you flashed it in their eyes."

"Could you run as fast as a tiger?"

"No, I'm afraid not." Cyrus Tuttle looked anxiously at his son, realizing that the little chap was at the fascinating game of frightening himself again. "Now listen, Henry," he said sharply. "Stop talking and thinking about tigers any more. There *aren't* any here and they couldn't possibly get here."

"I know, daddy," Henry answered with quick submission. But Cyrus Tuttle, watching him from the corner of his eye, could see the boy's eyes shifting about through the trees—seeking for places where wild animals might be concealed. After a while, however, Henry's face was lifted up trustfully to his father's. "There really isn't anything in these woods that could hurt us, is there daddy?"

"No, son, there is nothing. That's the way I like to have you talk. We are just going to have a fine camping trip and not worry about animals, aren't we? Even if we think about them, we are going to be reasonable and brave and tell ourselves they just don't exist."

"Yes." The boy's face was full of comradely trust. "We

aren't afraid, are we? We wouldn't be afraid even if there *were* real animals."

After that there was no more talk of terrifying things. Hunger came and they ate. Thirst came and they drank from a spring—lying on their bellies and burying their mouths and noses in the fresh water.

"This is fun, isn't it, daddy? When will we be there?"

The boy was tired. Cyrus Tuttle saw him shifting his pack to ease shoulders that ached—but never a word came from him, nor did his father offer sympathy. That was part of the camping test.

Finally they reached High-Meadow Lake—a clear, cold little pond cupped in the hills up above the Hudson River. If it hadn't been for the shrill sound of a locomotive whistle that was suddenly blown up to them over the mountains from the railroad that skirted the river down below, they might have imagined themselves far away from civilization. Henry pricked his ears at sound of it.

"What was that, daddy?"

"The trains whistling."

"Maybe it's the circus train, daddy."

"Maybe." Cyrus Tuttle consulted his watch. "Yes," he assented, "it probably is the circus train. There are no passenger-trains at this hour." He paused and listened as the whistle blew again—long and loud with a series of short whistles after it "But I can't imagine," he added, "why they keep it up that way."

"Sounds like a fire-alarm, daddy."

"Yes, it does a little," Cyrus Tuttle admitted. "I suppose circus trains make a lot of noise to attract attention. Well," he said as the insistent whistling kept up its series of long and short signals, "I think we'd better get busy and prepare our tent."

Together they set up their piece of canvas in the form of a three-sided shelter, and gathered leaves and pine-needles for beds. Then they hunted for worms to bait their hooks, the father pulling up rocks and stumps while Henry picked up the worms with nimble fingers. He went at it a little gingerly

at first but with gathering courage as he discovered that the squirming things did not hurt.

"Will you put my worms on for me, daddy?" The question came hesitantly—reluctant to ask anything that might be considered unmanly. "They are so wriggly. I'm afraid of hurting them," he excused himself.

"All right," Cyrus Tuttle agreed. "Only I want you to watch daddy and learn how. Daddy doesn't enjoy putting worms on either but he does it just the same. If you want to be a real fisherman you must bait your own hook."

Silence then except for an occasional excited whisper from Henry to say that he felt a bite. They no longer paid any attention to the shrill whistling that had been going on for nearly an hour now down over the mountains to the railroad-track. Then a joyous cry from Henry and a face of triumph as he flung his first fish up onto the bank.

"Daddy! I caught a great big one! Look at him, daddy!"

Cyrus Tuttle smiled sympathetically at the boy's delight and he watched with pride as Henry even screwed up courage to take the fish off the hook himself. When it came to cleaning the fish with his beautiful, bone-handled knife, Henry was eagerness itself, but his joy was at its height when, with the sun setting, they built their crude fireplace of stones and began frying their fish over the crackling flames.

"Isn't it fun, daddy?" The little face glowed with enthusiasm and happy adventure, and Cyrus Tuttle decided contentedly that fear had been banished from the boy's mind for that night at least. He seemed to be entirely unconscious of the falling darkness, whereas at home darkness had always spelled terror to Henry. He would never go to bed alone.

Quiet had come down over the deeply shadowed lake. The noisy whistling of the locomotive had ceased. Cyrus Tuttle was fully satisfied over his experiment in camping with Henry. It was making a man of the too imaginative youngster.

Suddenly, however, the father saw Henry's eyes fix on a distant rock. The cheeks went pale. The lips trembled and Cyrus Tuttle saw the boy's throat muscles contract in that

gulp that comes of terror. Henry faced his father with dilated eyes. His voice shook as he cried out:

"Daddy! *Daddy!* I saw a tiger!" In an instant he was in his father's arms, trying to hide his face in the paternal neck —not crying but shaking with fear.

"Son, son!" Cyrus Tuttle soothed. "It *couldn't* have been a tiger. Didn't daddy tell you that there *are* no tigers here and that they couldn't *possibly* get here." He laughed with gentle derision. "Now show me where it was and we will go there, and daddy will show you that it couldn't have been a tiger."

"I don't want to go, daddy. I'm afraid."

Cyrus Tuttle got to his feet, taking Henry's hand in his, and tried to lead him toward the big rock, but Henry held back—face ashen and eyes filled with hysterical terror.

"I don't want to go! Don't make me go, daddy!" He was gasping and shaking with dread, so his father abandoned the attempt.

"But you understand, don't you, that it *really* couldn't have been a tiger? You know daddy wouldn't lie to you!"

"What could it have been?" Henry still clung tight to his father.

"It might have been a dog—but probably it wasn't anything at all."

"It *looked* like a tiger, daddy." Henry was striving hard to be calm and reasonable. "I really think it *was* a tiger." His big brown eyes looked earnestly into his father's through a glaze of tears, and he tried to still the quiver of his mouth. "*Couldn't* we go home, daddy, to mother?"

"Now, son," Cyrus Tuttle argued with gentle reproach, "don't you remember daddy said there was to be no turning back once we started. No 'fraid-cats' on our camping trip. I want my boy to be brave—and it is brave to do anything when you are afraid to do it; so we are going to stay here to-night and you are going to be perfectly safe because you *know* there *couldn't* be a tiger up here. Aren't you?"

There was a moment of hesitation. Cyrus Tuttle could see by the tense look of dread in those dilated pupils, by the

quiver of the sensitive mouth and the pallor of the cheeks that Henry was having a battle to be courageous. Then a smile—a brave smile that was meant to reassure his father—was forced to the trembling lips.

"All right, daddy," he said. Then more sturdily: "It's a good thing mother isn't here, isn't it? She would be afraid, wouldn't she? But I wouldn't be afraid even if it *was* a real tiger, would you? I've got a knife and a hatchet."

Henry gave just one more look at the tiger-rock and then sat down beside the fire again—naïvely trying not to let his father see that he was shifting his place so that the latter would be between him and the rock. His appetite was gone, however. Cyrus Tuttle noted it and determined to make the boy forget if he could.

"Let's go down to the spring and get some water," he suggested presently, getting up from the fire and taking Henry's hand in his.

The sun was well set by then and darkness falling rapidly. The father saw Henry give one covert glance over his shoulder in the direction of the now almost obliterated tiger-rock, but he made no protest. He was trying hard to master his fear—to keep it to himself.

"You are daddy's brave boy," Cyrus Tuttle said encouragingly as they stepped away from the fire into the darkness. The next instant he tripped—the toe of his boot having caught under the loop of an outgrown root—and he was flung forward to the ground with violence. In falling, a jagged rock struck his shin, and there was a dull "plop." Cyrus Tuttle's leg was broken, though for a moment he didn't realize it. When he moved, trying to disengage the still entangled toe, the broken bone ends scraped the raw nerves, and a cry of agony broke from his lips.

"Daddy! *Daddy!*" wailed Henry at the sound. "Did you hurt yourself?"

"Yes, son," Cyrus Tuttle answered with exaggerated calm, for he didn't want to frighten the boy. "I've hurt myself rather badly. I'm afraid you'll have to help daddy."

The very calmness of his father's voice, and the fact that he

did not get up but lay inert where he had fallen, brought a flashing intuition of calamity to Henry.

"What's the matter, daddy?" he cried. "Why don't you get up?" The poor little voice was thrilling with panic.

"I've broken my leg, son," Cyrus Tuttle told him quietly, "and I can't get up because it hurts me too much, but daddy will be all right if you can help him."

"What shall I do?" Henry was steadier at once. "Poor daddy!" he added sympathetically. "Is it broken right off? Won't you have any more leg?"

"No, dear, it isn't broken right off. My leg is still there but the bone inside is broken. I want you to see if you can get daddy's foot out from under that root."

"All right."

In the darkness Henry's fingers took hold of the tight-caught foot and pulled to loosen it. With the jarring of the broken bone ends the sweat poured out all over the body of Cyrus Tuttle and, in spite of him, a low moan escaped his lips. Henry let go the foot with a frightened wail.

"Daddy! Daddy! I didn't mean it!" he sobbed—and stronger than his suffering there rose in Cyrus Tuttle a sensation of choking tenderness for the boy's pathetic remorse.

"I know you didn't, Henry," he said, swallowing the lump that had risen to his throat. "You were helping daddy. Did you get it out?"

"No, daddy. I was afraid," Henry said miserably.

"Is it a big root, son?"

"Not *very* big, daddy." Henry was making a strong effort to control the quaver in his voice. "Maybe I could cut it with my knife. I *think* I could— if you opened it for me. It's a sharp knife, isn't it, daddy?"

"Yes, it's a dandy, son. Be careful not to cut yourself."

"Wouldn't mother be surprised if she could see me?" Henry said with a note of pride as, in the darkness, he began cutting sturdily. "I'm glad it's so sharp. I can really help you, can't I?"

"Yes, son."

"It's almost cut now, daddy." His voice was quite cheery.

"There!" he cried after another few minutes. "Now you can pull your foot out."

Cyrus Tuttle pulled himself to a sitting position, and knew by the pain it caused him that something more than a simple fracture had taken place. He suspected that the bone had pierced the flesh.

"Can you walk now, daddy?" Henry asked eagerly, naïvely unsuspecting of the real significance of a broken leg.

"No, dear, daddy can't walk. He won't be able to walk until a doctor has made the broken bones grow together." Cyrus Tuttle felt a wave of weakness and nausea sweeping over him, nor was he able to keep back a groan.

"Oh, daddy," pleaded Henry tearfully, "does it hurt very much?"

"Pretty bad, son. Just don't talk to daddy for a minute, please."

"All right, daddy." The tone was beautifully sweet. Then for a few minutes there was silence while Cyrus Tuttle lay in pain—wondering what he was going to do. But the silence could not last. It was too much for Henry's troubled state of mind. "Daddy," he whispered. "Are you better now, daddy?"

"No, dear," his father answered, realizing that it was better for Henry to understand the truth. "Daddy's leg can't get any better right away. He needs a doctor to fix it. He's going to try to get back to the tent now—and you mustn't mind if he groans a little. He just can't help it."

It was excruciating work, that, dragging the broken leg along the ground—hitching along between gasps and groans, and trying for the sake of the distressed Henry not to show his full misgivings—but Cyrus Tuttle reached the canvas shelter and the fire at last. The nausea was very bad, however, and he desired water.

"Do you think, Henry, that you could go alone to the spring for some water?" he asked. "Daddy feels faint. Take the pail and the flash-light."

"Yes, daddy." Henry's response was quick and eager. He found flash and pail and started off. Then he hesitated.

"Daddy," he asked, "would it be all right if I took my hatchet too? I'm not afraid," he added hastily, "only—only I just like to have it."

"Yes, dear," Cyrus Tuttle told him gently. "Take your hatchet."

The sound of Henry's feet grew dimmer in the darkness. Then:

"I'm all right, daddy," came his high-pitched voice. "I won't be long." Then again: "I'm at the spring, daddy." And Cyrus Tuttle knew the little fellow was bolstering up his courage by keeping contact by voice—so he kept calling back cheerfully, too.

"All right, son. Don't hurry."

"I'm coming back now, daddy. Can you see my light?"

"Yes, I see it."

"Here I am." This was close at hand, and in another moment he was back beside his father. Then with eager solicitude, he found their tin cup, dipped it full from the pail of water, and held it to Cyrus Tuttle's lips.

"Thank you, son." He held up his hand and Henry put his warm little palm into it. It was a moment of very close communion between father and son. In Henry's brown eyes there welled up sudden tears of intense love. These he dashed aside with his sleeve, however, and in the darkness they passed unseen. He had no suspicion that his father's eyes were also moist.

For several minutes the two remained like that in perfect silence. Cyrus Tuttle was considering the gravity of their situation and wondering grimly what they could do. Henry also was thinking—making big decisions for a six-year-old boy, driving his imagination to obey his will and reaching with it courageous heights which his mother would not have believed possible for her timid boy.

"You can't get home, daddy, can you?" he demanded abruptly. "Not even if I help you?"

"Well," Cyrus Tuttle admitted reluctantly, "I don't know yet how I am going to manage it."

"Do you think anybody will find us?"

"Not likely, Henry."

"Will your leg get worse, daddy, if the doctor doesn't come right away?" asked the boy with queer intuition.

"Well, son, it may," Cyrus Tuttle admitted slowly. "I don't know just what happens to broken legs when the doctor doesn't fix them right away. Daddy may get feverish, but you mustn't be worried if he does." The father was trying to prepare his son for the complications he feared would result. Already the leg was swelling painfully.

Silence again while Henry's hand rested warmly in his father's. Then suddenly the boy spoke with startling resolution.

"Daddy, I could walk home and get mother." His child's mind had worked logically to the one best thing to do—something Cyrus Tuttle would never have asked of him, but a thrill of pride went through him at the sturdy offer, and he desired —not for himself but for Henry's own moral sake—that the boy might accomplish the deed.

"Son," he answered him quietly, "you are a very brave boy to offer to go. I am very proud of you. Mother will be, too."

"Could I take the 'lectric flash-light, daddy?"

"Certainly."

"And my hatchet? Tigers are afraid of hatchets, aren't they? You don't mind my wanting to take my hatchet, do you, daddy?" he asked with quick apology. "I'm not afraid, daddy. Anyway I can shine the 'lectric flash-light in their eyes if they come for me. And the road is straight down. I remember. There aren't any ways to go wrong, are there? Just down the hill all the time till I reach the bottom. Then I know where I am." He spoke with a cheery tone that was meant to be manly.

"Straight down, son. You can't get lost. There aren't any side roads. You are daddy's fine big boy."

"You won't mind being alone, will you, daddy?" There was a tremor in Henry's voice that he could not control, but the darkness concealed from his father the pallor of fear occasioned by the tricks his imagination was playing on him—

visions of leaping beasts. "I'm your big brave boy, aren't I, daddy?" he concluded.

"Yes, you are," Cyrus Tuttle answered warmly, also glad of the darkness which concealed the lump he suddenly had to swallow. "You are daddy's very best boy. No 'fraid-cat' about you. Mother will be proud of you."

"She'll be surprised, won't she, when I come walking in all alone? It'll be kind of fun, daddy, to surprise her." Henry was trying to put into the background the pictures his imagination was conjuring up. "Where is the flash-light, daddy? I guess I'll go now."

"Here it is, son," Cyrus Tuttle said cheerfully, as if he had no suspicion of the boy's struggle. "Don't frighten mother about me. Don't tell her about my groans. Just say I broke my leg but am all right."

"All right, daddy. Good-by, daddy." Two little arms went about Cyrus Tuttle's neck, and a quivering mouth kissed his. There was a catch in the voice as the actual parting came, and Cyrus Tuttle feared a breakdown. His own eyes were smarting and that lump was up in his throat again. He had a qualm at letting that courageous lad go off into the darkness alone—knowing how he feared it, and the father clung to Henry's childish body, the impulse strong in him to keep him back, but before he could speak the boy said ruggedly: "It's going to be fun, isn't it, daddy? All alone with just a light and a hatchet? And I'll have my knife in my pocket, too, only I won't use it. You needn't worry."

"I won't worry," Cyrus Tuttle assured him. "I know you are all right."

"And tigers can't swim across the big ocean, can they?"

"No, son. You *really, really* don't have to think about tigers. There *can't* be any in these mountains. You know daddy wouldn't let you go if there were."

"I know. I'm not afraid. Maybe it was a dog I saw on the big rock—only it *looked* like a tiger—all yellow and black stripes—and it jumped down kind of soft and funny the way the one at the circus did. I won't be gone long, daddy. I'll run all the way if I can."

"Good-by, son."

"Good-by, daddy."

Henry turned his back resolutely, sending the beam of his flash-light out before him along the path that led to the wood road. His father watched the little figure stride away and blend into the night, the brave feet crackling on the dry twigs.

"Good-by, daddy." Henry's voice carried clear and resolute from the trail. "Can you hear me, daddy?"

"Yes, son. Good-by."

Twice more Henry and his father shouted, and then their voices could no longer span the distance. They were separated beyond recall. A desolate feeling of loneliness swept over Cyrus Tuttle at that, and he knew Henry was probably experiencing the same emotion but far more poignantly. His heart filled with remorse and misgiving. Poor, brave little shaver! Would he have the courage to go on?

Straining his ears Cyrus Tuttle lay listening—hoping, wishing that he might hear Henry come running back. But there was no sound—just the swish of an evening breeze stirring the tree-tops. And his anxiety grew. He shouldn't have let Henry go. He knew his wife wouldn't have permitted him to—and yet it was a wonderful test. Wonderful!

Those sturdy little legs! The hatchet grasped in the small fist! And the precious knife in his pocket! Cyrus Tuttle's heart swelled. His throat felt tight and his eyes stung. Brave little lad! The father pictured him as he must be striding along down the dark trail—stumbling, getting up, flashing his light ahead, gripping his hatchet—his imagination manufacturing tigers behind every dark patch. Blessed, blessed boy! His mother would be surprised.

Suddenly a big, lithe, yellow-and-black-striped form leaped over a seven-foot bush and stood in the flickering light of Cyrus Tuttle's fire. Gleaming eyes, a switching tail, square head with ears flattened back! The terrible yellow fangs of a great Bengal tiger! A snarl that sent Cyrus Tuttle's blood cold and tore a scream of terror from his lips! Then the beast was gone—bounding off along the wood trail that Henry had taken. The father could hear the light thud! thud! of the pad-

ded paws; then a sniff and the long-drawn, hungry whine that told him the tiger had picked up the fresh scent of the boy Henry. Another light snapping of a twig as he ran down the road! And silence.

Cyrus Tuttle's courage broke—and he shouted hoarsely: "Son! *Son!*" But Henry was beyond the reach of his father's voice—a hungry tiger trailing him. Still Cyrus Tuttle called, sick with horror, shuddering and sweating: "Son! *Son!*"

He began dragging himself along the ground down the trail, his broken leg dragging and bumping the roots and stones, moaning, gritting his teeth, calling to Henry. Frantic, he saw the childish body mangled, torn to shreds, devoured—just as they had watched the beasts rend and devour their raw meat at the circus.

Cyrus Tuttle recalled then the mad, hysterical whistling of the locomotive that morning—signalling, spreading the alarm that a tiger had escaped from the circus train. A careless attendant, the fury and sudden fearful strength of the great Bengal tiger! A leap to the ground from the moving train!

Henry's tiger had been real. Cyrus Tuttle shut his eyes and groaned as he recalled his own foolish words of reassurance that it *couldn't* be a tiger.

"Son! *Son!*" he shouted in anguish. Overwhelmed, sick with dread, he lay in the trail and listened for the tiger's snarling whine to repeat itself. But no sound came.

Perhaps already the beast had drawn near Henry. Perhaps already he was creeping, belly to the ground, preparing for his spring! The vision was horribly vivid and Cyrus Tuttle groaned through teeth that were gritted.

On again he went—hitching himself, dragging the agonized leg, sweating with pain and nausea, yet almost unconscious of it all—his mind with the fine little lad who was hurrying bravely down the hill to bring assistance.

Gasping and crying now! Calling out! Blaspheming! Henry's name torn constantly from his lips, accusing himself for not having listened to the boy's repeated statement that he had seen a tiger.

"Henry! *Henry!*"

Three-quarters of an hour passed like that, during which Cyrus Tuttle dragged his mutilated leg over the rough trail, seeking vainly to overtake his son. Then suddenly he heard men's voices behind him, coming down the wood road that he had just passed over. There was also the yap of a dog. Lights appeared and the men's voices became words.

"He's getting the scent hot now. He's pulling hard." Then an excited exclamation: "God! There's a man lying in the road! From the camp back there! The tiger must have got him!"

There was a clatter of feet and the men surrounded Cyrus Tuttle. He understood at once that they were men from the circus who were hunting the tiger with the dog. They had followed the spoor up over the mountains from the railroad. Breathlessly they questioned him.

"Down the trail!" he begged. "My boy is down the trail! All alone! The tiger smelled him! Hurry!" He saw the ghastly shake of one man's head—the furtive look. "Hurry!" he shouted.

"The dog is pulling," one of them said. "Maybe we ain't too late." But Cyrus Tuttle knew he believed it *was* too late.

The men hurried off, following in the lead of the eager dog who was straining at his leash. Directly down the road. The scent was fresh and the dog whined. The last Cyrus Tuttle heard was the dog's sharp yelp of satisfaction as he picked up an odor that told him the tiger was near. Then for nearly an hour—a horrible, horrible hour—the father lay exhausted in the wood road, straining his ears for sounds of their return; and all the time his imagination was at work visualizing scenes that made him shiver and curse.

Finally there came the flash of a lantern and Cyrus Tuttle saw one of the men coming back up the trail. His feet lagged. Beside Cyrus Tuttle he stopped. His arm reached out and he put a bone-handled knife into the father's hand.

"We found it in the road," he said pityingly. "Guess it belonged to your boy—but there was no sign of *him*." He broke off as if he found it hard to tell the rest.

Cyrus Tuttle felt a deathly faintness sweep over him.

"Go on," he managed to say. "Tell me."

"Well"—the man cleared his throat—"the dog left the road there and we trailed the tiger to a cave in the rocks."

Cyrus Tuttle felt the world swaying about him, but he had to ask one more question.

"And was there any sign of—of—my boy—inside the cave?" His voice broke and turned into a strangled cry.

"Nobody can't get into the cave now," the circus man told him. "We wouldn't none of us dare. In the morning when more help comes we'll be able to make the tiger come out and catch him in a net. We've got the entrance netted now."

"Help me to get up on my foot," Cyrus Tuttle said. "Take me to the cave."

"It ain't no use, mister. You wouldn't find nothing—now."

Then Cyrus Tuttle's shoulders began to shake and the circus man laid a rough hand on them—pity in the touch, but there was nothing he knew how to say to a man who was sobbing with the agonized sounds that Cyrus Tuttle was making. They were torn from his breast and seemed to wrench his very heart loose with them—and ever before his eyes the vision of a bloodthirsty tiger with the limp form of a small boy held between the great jaws—the beast bounding off the trail into the woods until a cave was found into which he could retreat with his kill.

Cyrus Tuttle's hand clasped with frantic tenderness about the little bone-handled knife and he seemed almost to feel again the soft, warm palm of his son.

"How soon will more men come?" he managed to ask. "To open the cave?"

"We've sent already for more men and a truck." He broke off to listen. "Seems like I heard an auto now," he exclaimed.

"With more men you can do something right away?" Cyrus Tuttle asked.

"We'll try, mister—but you've got to understand—" His voice trailed off into pitying silence.

On came the sound of the automobile, toiling up the uneven wood road, the sound of the engine growing constantly

more clear. After a time the two men began to see flashes of the headlights, and then it swung around a turn, throwing the blinding glare directly on them.

"Hey!" shouted the circus man waving his arms. "Slow up!"

The motor roared for a second and then stopped. In the silence there came the high-pitched voice of a child.

"It's daddy, Doctor Price, and another man with him."

"*Son!*" Cyrus Tuttle called wildly. "*Son!*"

"I'm coming, daddy." There was the patter of feet and the bobbing of an electric torch as Henry ran forward. Then two arms were flung about Cyrus Tuttle's neck and he held the dear, slender body of his son close to him, while tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Are you crying, daddy?"

"Yes, darling. I'm so glad to see you."

There came a sniffle from Henry at that and the arms clasped his father tighter.

"I didn't know you ever cried," he sobbed, a mixture of relief and disillusionment in his voice. "I wanted to, but wouldn't let them come." Another convulsive hug and sob. "And, daddy, that dog followed me all the way down the mountain. I thought it was a tiger and was afraid; but I *knew* it was only a dog, daddy, because you said it *couldn't* be a tiger—so I told him to go home, and flashed my light in his eyes—and then I threw a stone at him, daddy, and he *did* go home. Was I brave, daddy?"

"Yes, you were, son. You are daddy's big boy." Cyrus Tuttle could hardly articulate the words.

"But I *was* afraid, daddy. Do you mind?"

"No, son, that's why you were brave. And where is mother?"

"I didn't tell mother, daddy. I just went right to Doctor Price and told him. I didn't want to scare mother. She's just a girl, isn't she? And she might have seen the dog, too, and thought it was a tiger—and then she'd have been afraid. Was that all right, daddy?"

"Yes, dear."

"I'm glad." Henry's voice was very stout and cheery. Suddenly, however, the note changed to a despairing wail, while his hands sought frantically in trouser-pockets. "Daddy! *Daddy!*" he cried, "I've lost my—my bea-u-tiful knife, my nuh-new knife with the bone handle. Oh, *daddy!* Do you *mind?*"

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What emotions do the first five paragraphs arouse?
2. What do the first fifteen paragraphs promise for the story?
3. What is the boy's most notable characteristic?
4. Point out evidences that show the weaker side of the boy's nature.
5. Point out evidences that show the stronger side of the boy's nature.
6. By what means does the father strengthen the boy's spirit?
7. After you have read the entire story, point out all the evidences that foreshadow the events told in the latter part of the narrative.
8. By what means does the author arouse the reader's sympathy?
9. Which events in the story are most striking or most unusual?
10. In what respects is the story a study of character?
11. What makes the boy courageous?
12. Does the father do right in permitting the boy to go on the dangerous errand?
13. How does the author arouse suspense?
14. To what various emotions does the story appeal?
15. Why does the author tell what the father did, after the boy had gone down the dark trail, before he tells what the boy did?
16. What does the author accomplish by telling of the finding of the boy's knife?
17. In what ways does the story appeal to the imagination?
18. What effect does the announcement of the boy's safe return produce on the reader?
19. What emotions fill the reader at the end of the story?
20. At the end of the story, how do we feel toward the boy? toward the father?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"On the Dark Trail" is both a psychological story and a story of event, that is, it deals with states of mind, their causes, and their results, and it also tells of startling events. The story has special interest because it concerns childhood and the development of character. The vivid action strongly stimulates the imagination. The author

arouses such keen sympathy with the principal person in the story that he makes a deep emotional appeal to the reader.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, show some person conquering instinctive and habitual feelings because he has a motive strong enough to make him overcome them. Make the incidents of the story unusual and dramatic, and tell as much as possible through the medium of dialogue.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. A girl is afraid of snakes. Her older brother assures her that the only snakes near them are quite harmless. He shows her how he catches them with forked sticks. Circumstances lead the girl to overcome her repugnance and to catch a snake that she thinks harmless, but that really is extremely dangerous.
2. A small boy is afraid of rough-looking workmen. The father explains that the men he sees are merely laborers, and he advises the boy to talk with them about their work. Circumstances lead the boy to talk with some desperate men whom he thinks to be harmless workmen. The boy's naïve talk saves his father from misfortune.
3. A girl who is taking her first lessons in managing saddle-horses is told that the horses she will be given are all gentle. Her insistent fear leads people to tell her, somewhat humorously, what she should do to control horses under various circumstances. By accident she is given a dangerous horse, but the fact that she thinks it gentle, and therefore acts without fear, keeps her from harm.
4. A boy is much afraid of ghosts. As a means of allaying his fears, people tell him certain words supposed to drive away any ghost. One evening, armed with his "magic words," he bravely goes on an errand that takes him past a cemetery. It happens that a dangerous lunatic comes from the darkness and is about to seize the boy. The boy has such faith in his magic words, and utters them so calmly and so commandingly, that he turns the lunatic from his purpose. Thus, without realizing it, the boy saves his own life.
5. A young person who has unusual fear of high places is persuaded to go with a single friend to a place where there is a high cliff. The friend, in trying to show how little danger there is, falls from the cliff and is caught on a jutting rock some feet below, and becomes unconscious. The timid person descends and manages to effect a rescue.

RIP VAN WINKLE *

By Washington Irving

Washington Irving (1783–1859), the first American writer to gain recognition in Europe, was born in New York City, the son of wealthy parents of Scotch and English origin. Ill health early in life sent him to Europe, thereby establishing a love of travel that influenced the rest of his life. In later years he lived at various times in London, in Madrid, and in Granada, and he wandered much in Europe and in America. He lived abroad for seventeen years, from the time that he was thirty-two until he was forty-nine. He served the United States as secretary to the embassy at London, and as ambassador to Spain. He was equally great in the writing of short stories, essays, biography, and history. Among his works are the following: *A History of New York, by Diedrich Knickerbocker* (1809), *The Sketch Book* (1820), *Bracebridge Hall* (1822), *Tales of a Traveller* (1824), *History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (1828), *The Voyages and Discoveries of the Companions of Columbus* (1831), *The Conquest of Granada* (1829), *The Alhambra* (1832), *Astoria* (1836), *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville* (1837), *The Life of Oliver Goldsmith* (1849), *The Lives of Mahomet and His Successors* (1849–1850), *The Life of George Washington* (1855–1859).

WHOEVER has made a voyage up the Hudson must remember the Kaatskill mountains. They are a dismembered branch of the great Appalachian family, and are seen away to the west of the river, swelling up to a noble height, and lording it over the surrounding country. Every change of season, every change of weather, indeed, every hour of the day, produces some change in the magical hues and shapes of these mountains, and they are regarded by all the good wives, far and near, as perfect barometers. When the weather is fair and settled, they are clothed in blue and purple, and

* From *The Sketch Book,* by Washington Irving.

print their bold outlines on the clear evening sky; but, sometimes, when the rest of the landscape is cloudless, they will gather a hood of gray vapors about their summits, which, in the last rays of the setting sun, will glow and light up like a crown of glory.

At the foot of these fairy mountains, the voyager may have descried the light smoke curling up from a village, whose shingle-roofs gleam among the trees, just where the blue tints of the upland melt away into the fresh green of the nearer landscape. It is a little village, of great antiquity, having been founded by some of the Dutch colonists, in the early times of the province, just about the beginning of the government of the good Peter Stuyvesant (may he rest in peace!), and there were some of the houses of the original settlers standing within a few years, built of small yellow bricks brought from Holland, having latticed windows and gable fronts, surmounted with weather-cocks.

In that same village, and in one of these very houses (which, to tell the precise truth, was sadly time-worn and weather-beaten), there lived many years since, while the country was yet a province of Great Britain, a simple good-natured fellow, of the name of Rip Van Winkle. He was a descendant of the Van Winkles who figured so gallantly in the chivalrous days of Peter Stuyvesant, and accompanied him to the siege of Fort Christina. He inherited, however, but little of the martial character of his ancestors. I have observed that he was a simple good-natured man; he was, moreover, a kind neighbor, and an obedient hen-pecked husband. Indeed, to the latter circumstance might be owing that meekness of spirit which gained him such universal popularity; for those men are most apt to be obsequious and conciliating abroad, who are under the discipline of shrews at home. Their tempers, doubtless, are rendered pliant and malleable in the fiery furnace of domestic tribulation; and a curtain lecture is worth all the sermons in the world for teaching the virtues of patience and long-suffering. A termagant wife may, therefore, in some respects, be considered a tolerable blessing; and if so, Rip Van Winkle was thrice blessed.

Certain it is, that he was a great favorite among all the good wives of the village, who, as usual with the amiable sex, took his part in all family squabbles; and never failed, whenever they talked those matters over in their evening gossipings, to lay all the blame on Dame Van Winkle. The children of the village, too, would shout with joy whenever he approached. He assisted at their sports, made their playthings, taught them to fly kites and shoot marbles, and told them long stories of ghosts, witches, and Indians. Whenever he went dodging about the village, he was surrounded by a troop of them, hanging on his skirts, clambering on his back, and playing a thousand tricks on him with impunity; and not a dog would bark at him throughout the neighborhood.

The great error in Rip's composition was an insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labor. It could not be from the want of assiduity or perseverance; for he would sit on a wet rock, with a rod as long and heavy as a Tartar's lance, and fish all day without a murmur, even though he should not be encouraged by a single nibble. He would carry a fowling-piece on his shoulder for hours together, trudging through woods and swamps, and up hill and down dale, to shoot a few squirrels or wild pigeons. He would never refuse to assist a neighbor even in the roughest toil, and was a foremost man at all country frolics for husking Indian corn, or building stone-fences; the women of the village, too, used to employ him to run their errands, and to do such little odd jobs as their less obliging husbands would not do for them. In a word Rip was ready to attend to anybody's business but his own; but as to doing family duty, and keeping his farm in order, he found it impossible.

In fact, he declared it was of no use to work on his farm; it was the most pestilent little piece of ground in the whole country; everything about it went wrong, and would go wrong, in spite of him. His fences were continually falling to pieces; his cow would either go astray, or get among the cabbages; weeds were sure to grow quicker in his fields than anywhere else; the rain always made a point of setting in just as he had some out-door work to do; so that though his patrimonial

estate had dwindled away under his management, acre by acre, until there was little more left than a mere patch of Indian corn and potatoes, yet it was the worst conditioned farm in the neighborhood.

His children, too, were as ragged and wild as if they belonged to nobody. His son Rip, an urchin begotten in his own likeness, promised to inherit the habits, with the old clothes of his father. He was generally seen trooping like a colt at his mother's heels, equipped in a pair of his father's cast-off galligaskins, which he had much ado to hold up with one hand, as a fine lady does her train in bad weather.

Rip Van Winkle, however, was one of those happy mortals, of foolish, well-oiled dispositions, who take the world easy, eat white bread or brown, whichever can be got with least thought or trouble, and would rather starve on a penny than work for a pound. If left to himself, he would have whistled life away in perfect contentment; but his wife kept continually dinning in his ears about his idleness, his carelessness, and the ruin he was bringing on his family. Morning, noon, and night, her tongue was incessantly going, and everything he said or did was sure to produce a torrent of household eloquence. Rip had but one way of replying to all lectures of the kind, and that, by frequent use, had grown into a habit. He shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, cast up his eyes, but said nothing. This, however, always provoked a fresh volley from his wife; so that he was fain to draw off his forces, and take to the outside of the house—the only side which, in truth, belongs to a hen-pecked husband.

Rip's sole domestic adherent was his dog Wolf, who was as much hen-pecked as his master; for Dame Van Winkle regarded them as companions in idleness, and even looked upon Wolf with an evil eye, as the cause of his master's going so often astray. True it is, in all points of spirit befitting an honorable dog, he was as courageous an animal as ever scoured the woods—but what courage can withstand the ever-enduring and all-besetting terrors of a woman's tongue? The moment Wolf entered the house his crest fell, his tail drooped to the ground, or curled between his legs, he sneaked about with

a gallows air, casting many a sidelong glance at Dame Van Winkle, and at the least flourish of a broomstick or ladle, he would fly to the door with yelping precipitation.

Times grew worse and worse with Rip Van Winkle as years of matrimony rolled on; a tart temper never mellows with age, and a sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use. For a long while he used to console himself, when driven from home, by frequenting a kind of perpetual club of the sages, philosophers, and other idle personages of the village; which held its sessions on a bench before a small inn, designated by a rubicund portrait of His Majesty George the Third. Here they used to sit in the shade through a long lazy summer's day, talking listlessly over village gossip, or telling endless sleepy stories about nothing. But it would have been worth any statesman's money to have heard the profound discussions that sometimes took place, when by chance an old newspaper fell into their hands from some passing traveller. How solemnly they would listen to the contents, as drawled out by Derrick Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, a dapper learned little man, who was not to be daunted by the most gigantic word in the dictionary; and how sagely they would deliberate upon public events some months after they had taken place.

The opinions of this junto were completely controlled by Nicholas Vedder, a patriarch of the village, and landlord of the inn, at the door of which he took his seat from morning till night, just moving sufficiently to avoid the sun and keep in the shade of a large tree; so that the neighbors could tell the hour by his movements as accurately as by a sun-dial. It is true he was rarely heard to speak, but smoked his pipe incessantly. His adherents, however (for every great man has his adherents), perfectly understood him, and knew how to gather his opinions. When anything that was read or related displeased him, he was observed to smoke his pipe vehemently, and to send forth short, frequent and angry puffs; but when pleased, he would inhale the smoke slowly and tranquilly, and emit it in light and placid clouds; and sometimes, taking the pipe from his mouth, and letting the

fragrant vapor curl about his nose, would gravely nod his head in token of perfect approbation.

From even this stronghold the unlucky Rip was at length routed by his termagant wife, who would suddenly break in upon the tranquillity of the assemblage and call the members all to naught; nor was that august personage, Nicholas Vedder himself, sacred from the daring tongue of this terrible virago, who charged him outright with encouraging her husband in habits of idleness.

Poor Rip was at last reduced almost to despair; and his only alternative, to escape from the labor of the farm and clamor of his wife, was to take gun in hand and stroll away into the woods. Here he would sometimes seat himself at the foot of a tree, and share the contents of his wallet with Wolf, with whom he sympathized as a fellow-sufferer in persecution. "Poor Wolf," he would say, "thy mistress leads thee a dog's life of it; but never mind, my lad, whilst I live thou shalt never want a friend to stand by thee!" Wolf would wag his tail, look wistfully in his master's face, and if dogs can feel pity I verily believe he reciprocated the sentiment with all his heart.

In a long ramble of the kind on a fine autumnal day, Rip had unconsciously scrambled to one of the highest parts of the Kaatskill mountains. He was after his favorite sport of squirrel-shooting, and the still solitudes had echoed and re-echoed with the reports of his gun. Panting and fatigued, he threw himself, late in the afternoon, on a green knoll, covered with mountain herbage, that crowned the brow of a precipice. From an opening between the trees he could overlook all the lower country for many a mile of rich woodland. He saw at a distance the lordly Hudson, far, far below him, moving on its silent but majestic course, with the reflection of a purple cloud, or the sail of a lagging bark, here and there sleeping on its glassy bosom, and at last losing itself in the blue highlands.

On the other side he looked down into a deep mountain glen, wild, lonely, and shagged, the bottom filled with fragments from the impending cliffs, and scarcely lighted by the

Rip Van Winkle Falls in the Catskills. Photo by Ewing Galloway, New York.

"He looked down into a deep mountain glen, wild, lonely, and shagged."

reflected rays of the setting sun. For some time Rip lay musing on this scene; evening was gradually advancing; the mountains began to throw their long blue shadows over the valleys; he saw that it would be dark long before he could reach the village, and he heaved a heavy sigh when he thought of encountering the terrors of Dame Van Winkle.

As he was about to descend, he heard a voice from a distance, hallooing, "Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!" He looked round, but could see nothing but a crow winging its solitary flight across the mountain. He thought his fancy must have deceived him, and turned again to descend, when he heard the same cry ring through the still evening air; "Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!"—at the same time Wolf bristled up his back, and giving a low growl, skulked to his master's side, looking fearfully down into the glen. Rip now felt a vague apprehension stealing over him; he looked anxiously in the same direction, and perceived a strange figure slowly toiling up the rocks, and bending under the weight of something he carried on his back. He was surprised to see any human being in this lonely and unfrequented place, but supposing it to be some one of the neighborhood in need of his assistance, he hastened down to yield it.

On nearer approach he was still more surprised at the singularity of the stranger's appearance. He was a short square-built old fellow, with thick bushy hair, and a grizzled beard. His dress was of the antique Dutch fashion—a cloth jerkin strapped round the waist—several pairs of breeches, the outer one of ample volume, decorated with rows of buttons down the sides, and bunches at the knees. He bore on his shoulder a stout keg, that seemed full of liquor, and made signs for Rip to approach and assist him with the load. Though rather shy and distrustful of this new acquaintance, Rip complied with his usual alacrity; and mutually relieving one another they clambered up a narrow gully, apparently the dry bed of a mountain torrent. As they ascended, Rip every now and then heard long rolling peals, like distant thunder, that seemed to issue out of a deep ravine, or rather cleft, between lofty rocks, toward which their rugged path conducted. He paused for an

instant, but supposing it to be the muttering of one of those transient thunder-showers which often take place in mountain heights, he proceeded. Passing through the ravine, they came to a hollow, like a small amphitheatre, surrounded by perpendicular precipices, over the brinks of which impending trees shot their branches, so that you only caught glimpses of the azure sky and the bright evening cloud. During the whole time Rip and his companion had labored on in silence; for though the former marvelled greatly what could be the object of carrying a keg of liquor up this wild mountain, yet there was something strange and incomprehensible about the unknown, that inspired awe and checked familiarity.

On entering the amphitheatre, new objects of wonder presented themselves. On a level spot in the centre was a company of odd-looking personages playing at nine-pins. They were dressed in quaint outlandish fashion; some wore short doublets, others jerkins, with long knives in their belts, and most of them had enormous breeches, of similar style with that of the guide's. Their visages, too, were peculiar: one had a large beard, broad face, and small piggish eyes; the face of another seemed to consist entirely of nose, and was surmounted by a white sugar-loaf hat, set off with a little red cock's tail. They all had beards, of various shapes and colors. There was one who seemed to be the commander. He was a stout old gentleman, with a weather-beaten countenance; he wore a laced doublet, broad belt and hanger, high crowned hat and feather, red stockings, and high-heeled shoes, with roses in them. The whole group reminded Rip of the figures in an old Flemish painting, in the parlor of Dominie Van Shaick, the village parson, which had been brought over from Holland at the time of the settlement.

What seemed particularly odd to Rip was, that though these folks were evidently amusing themselves, yet they maintained the gravest faces, the most mysterious silence, and were, withal, the most melancholy party of pleasure he had ever witnessed. Nothing interrupted the stillness of the scene but the noise of the balls, which, whenever they were rolled, echoed along the mountains like rumbling peals of thunder.

As Rip and his companion approached them, they suddenly desisted from their play, and stared at him with such fixed statue-like gaze, and such strange, uncouth, lack-lustre countenances, that his heart turned within him, and his knees smote together. His companion now emptied the contents of the keg into large flagons, and made signs to him to wait upon the company. He obeyed with fear and trembling; they quaffed the liquor in profound silence, and then returned to their game.

By degrees Rip's awe and apprehension subsided. He even ventured, when no eye was fixed upon him, to taste the beverage, which he found had much the flavor of excellent Hollands. He was naturally a thirsty soul, and was soon tempted to repeat the draught. One taste provoked another; and he reiterated his visits to the flagon so often that at length his senses were overpowered, his eyes swam in his head, his head gradually declined, and he fell into a deep sleep.

On waking, he found himself on the green knoll whence he had first seen the old man of the glen. He rubbed his eyes—it was a bright sunny morning. The birds were hopping and twittering among the bushes, and the eagle was wheeling aloft, and breasting the pure mountain breeze. "Surely," thought Rip, "I have not slept here all night." He recalled the occurrences before he fell asleep. The strange man with a keg of liquor—the mountain ravine—the wild retreat among the rocks—the woe-begone party at nine-pins—the flagon—"Oh! that flagon! that wicked flagon!" thought Rip—"what excuse shall I make to Dame Van Winkle!"

He looked round for his gun, but in place of the clean well-oiled fowling-piece, he found an old firelock lying by him, the barrel incrusted with rust, the lock falling off, and the stock worm-eaten. He now suspected that the grave roysters of the mountain had played a trick upon him, and, having dosed him with liquor, had robbed him of his gun. Wolf, too, had disappeared, but he might have strayed away after a squirrel or partridge. He whistled after him and shouted his name, but all in vain; the echoes repeated his whistle and shout, but no dog was to be seen.

He determined to revisit the scene of the last evening's gambol, and if he met with any of the party, to demand his dog and gun. As he rose to walk, he found himself stiff in the joints, and wanting in his usual activity. "These mountain beds do not agree with me," thought Rip, "and if this frolic should lay me up with a fit of the rheumatism, I shall have a blessed time with Dame Van Winkle." With some difficulty he got down into the glen: he found the gully up which he and his companion had ascended the preceding evening; but to his astonishment a mountain stream was now foaming down it, leaping from rock to rock, and filling the glen with babbling murmurs. He, however, made shift to scramble up its sides, working his toilsome way through thickets of birch, sassafras, and witch-hazel, and sometimes tripped up or entangled by the wild grapevines that twisted their coils or tendrils from tree to tree, and spread a kind of network in his path.

At length he reached to where the ravine had opened through the cliffs to the amphitheatre; but no traces of such opening remained. The rocks presented a high impenetrable wall over which the torrent came tumbling in a sheet of feathery foam, and fell into a broad deep basin, black from the shadows of the surrounding forest. Here, then, poor Rip was brought to a stand. He again called and whistled after his dog; he was only answered by the cawing of a flock of idle crows, sporting high in air about a dry tree that overhung a sunny precipice; and who, secure in their elevation, seemed to look down and scoff at the poor man's perplexities. What was to be done? the morning was passing away, and Rip felt famished for want of his breakfast. He grieved to give up his dog and gun; he dreaded to meet his wife; but it would not do to starve among the mountains. He shook his head, shouldered the rusty firelock, and, with a heart full of trouble and anxiety, turned his steps homeward.

As he approached the village he met a number of people, but none whom he knew, which somewhat surprised him, for he had thought himself acquainted with every one in the country round. Their dress, too, was of a different fashion from that to which he was accustomed. They all stared at him

with equal marks of surprise, and whenever they cast their eyes upon him, invariably stroked their chins. The constant recurrence of this gesture induced Rip, involuntarily, to do the same, when, to his astonishment, he found his beard had grown a foot long!

He had now entered the skirts of the village. A troop of strange children ran at his heels, hooting after him, and pointing at his gray beard. The dogs, too, not one of which he recognized for an old acquaintance, barked at him as he passed. The very village was altered; it was larger and more populous. There were rows of houses which he had never seen before, and those which had been his familiar haunts had disappeared. Strange names were over the doors—strange faces at the windows—everything was strange. His mind now misgave him; he began to doubt whether both he and the world around him were not bewitched. Surely this was his native village, which he had left but the day before. There stood the Kaatskill mountains—there ran the silver Hudson at a distance—there was every hill and dale precisely as it had always been—Rip was sorely perplexed—"That flagon last night," thought he, "has addled my poor head sadly!"

It was with some difficulty that he found the way to his own house, which he approached with silent awe, expecting every moment to hear the shrill voice of Dame Van Winkle. He found the house gone to decay—the roof fallen in, the windows shattered, and the doors off the hinges. A half-starved dog that looked like Wolf was skulking about it. Rip called him by name, but the cur snarled, showed his teeth, and passed on. This was an unkind cut indeed— "My very dog," sighed poor Rip, "has forgotten me!"

He entered the house, which to tell the truth, Dame Van Winkle had always kept in neat order. It was empty, forlorn, and apparently abandoned. This desolateness overcame all his connubial fears—he called loudly for his wife and children—the lonely chambers rang for a moment with his voice, and then all again was silence.

He now hurried forth, and hastened to his old resort the village inn—but it too was gone. A large rickety wooden

building stood in its place, with great gaping windows, some of them broken and mended with old hats and petticoats, and over the door was painted, "the Union Hotel, by Jonathan Doolittle." Instead of the great tree that used to shelter the quiet little Dutch inn of yore, there now was reared a tall naked pole, with something on the top that looked like a red night-cap, and from it was fluttering a flag, on which was a singular assemblage of stars and stripes—all this was strange and incomprehensible. He recognized on the sign, however, the ruby face of King George, under which he had smoked so many a peaceful pipe; but even this was singularly metamorphosed. The red coat was changed for one of blue and buff, a sword was held in the hand instead of a sceptre, the head was decorated with a cocked hat, and underneath was painted in large characters, GENERAL WASHINGTON.

There was, as usual, a crowd of folk about the door, but none that Rip recollected. The very character of the people seemed changed. There was a busy, bustling, disputatious tone about it, instead of the accustomed phlegm and drowsy tranquillity. He looked in vain for the sage Nicholas Vedder, with his broad face, double chin, and fair long pipe, uttering clouds of tobacco-smoke instead of idle speeches; or Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, doling forth the contents of an ancient newspaper. In place of these, a lean, bilious-looking fellow, with his pockets full of handbills, was haranguing vehemently about rights of citizens—elections—members of congress—liberty—Bunker's Hill—heroes of seventy-six—and other words, which were a perfect Babylonish jargon to the bewildered Van Winkle.

The appearance of Rip, with his long grizzled beard, his rusty fowling-piece, his uncouth dress, and an army of women and children at his heels, soon attracted the attention of the tavern politicians. They crowded round him, eying him from head to foot with great curiosity. The orator bustled up to him, and, drawing him partly aside, inquired "on which side he voted?" Rip stared in vacant stupidity. Another short but busy little fellow pulled him by the arm, and, rising on tiptoe, inquired in his ear, "Whether he was

Federal or Democrat?'' Rip was equally at a loss to comprehend the question; when a knowing, self-important old gentleman, in a sharp cocked hat, made his way through the crowd, putting them to the right and left with his elbows as he passed, and planting himself before Van Winkle, with one arm akimbo, the other resting on his cane, his keen eyes and sharp hat penetrating, as it were, into his very soul, demanded in an austere tone, ''what brought him to the election with a gun on his shoulder, and a mob at his heels, and whether he meant to breed a riot in the village?''— ''Alas! gentlemen,'' cried Rip, somewhat dismayed, ''I am a poor quiet man, a native of the place, and a loyal subject of the king, God bless him!''

Here a general shout burst from the bystanders— ''A tory! a tory! a spy! a refugee! hustle him! away with him!'' It was with great difficult that the self-important man in the cocked hat restored order; and, having assumed a tenfold austerity of brow, demanded again of the unknown culprit, what he came there for, and whom he was seeking? The poor man humbly assured him that he meant no harm, but merely came there in search of some of his neighbors, who used to keep about the tavern.

''Well—who are they?—name them.''

Rip bethought himself a moment, and inquired, ''Where's Nicholas Vedder?''

There was a silence for a little while, when an old man replied, in a thin piping voice, ''Nicholas Vedder! why, he is dead and gone these eighteen years! There was a wooden tombstone in the churchyard that used to tell all about him, but that's rotten and gone too.''

''Where's Brom Dutcher?''

''Oh, he went off to the army in the beginning of the war; some say he was killed at the storming of Stony Point— others say he was drowned in a squall at the foot of Antony's Nose. I don't know—he never came back again.''

''Where's Van Bummel, the schoolmaster?''

''He went off to the wars too, was a great militia general, and is now in congress.''

Rip's heart died away at hearing of these sad changes in his home and friends, and finding himself thus alone in the world. Every answer puzzled him too, by treating of such enormous lapses of time, and of matters which he could not understand: war—congress—Stony Point;—he had no courage to ask after any more friends, but cried out in despair, "Does nobody here know Rip Van Winkle?"

"Oh, Rip Van Winkle!" exclaimed two or three, "Oh, to be sure! that's Rip Van Winkle yonder, leaning against the tree."

Rip looked, and beheld a precise counterpart of himself, as he went up the mountain: apparently as lazy, and certainly as ragged. The poor fellow was now completely confounded. He doubted his own identity, and whether he was himself or another man. In the midst of his bewilderment, the man in the cocked hat demanded who he was, and what was his name?

"God knows," exclaimed he, at his wit's end; "I'm not myself—I'm somebody else—that's me yonder—no—that's somebody else got into my shoes—I was myself last night, but I fell asleep on the mountain, and they've changed my gun, and everything's changed, and I'm changed, and I can't tell what's my name, or who I am!"

The bystanders began now to look at each other, nod, wink significantly, and tap their fingers against their foreheads. There was a whisper, also, about securing the gun, and keeping the old fellow from doing mischief, at the very suggestion of which the self-important man in the cocked hat retired with some precipitation. At this critical moment a fresh comely woman pressed through the throng to get a peep at the gray-bearded man. She had a chubby child in her arms, which, frightened at his looks, began to cry. "Hush, Rip," cried she, "hush, you little fool; the old man won't hurt you." The name of the child, the air of the mother, the tone of her voice, all awakened a train of recollections in his mind. "What is your name, my good woman?" asked he.

"Judith Gardenier."

"And your father's name?"

"Ah, poor man, Rip Van Winkle was his name, but it's twenty years since he went away from home with his gun, and never has been heard of since—his dog came home without him; but whether he shot himself, or was carried away by the Indians, nobody can tell. I was then but a little girl."

Rip had but one more question to ask; but he put it with a faltering voice:—

"Where's your mother?"

"Oh, she too has died but a short time since; she broke a blood-vessel in a fit of a passion at a New-England peddler."

There was a drop of comfort, at least, in this intelligence. The honest man could contain himself no longer. He caught his daughter and her child in his arms. "I am your father!" cried he— "Young Rip Van Winkle once—old Rip Van Winkle now!—Does nobody know poor Rip Van Winkle?"

All stood amazed, until an old woman, tottering out from among the crowd, put her hand to her brow, and peering under it in his face for a moment, exclaimed, "Sure enough! it is Rip Van Winkle—it is himself! Welcome home again, old neighbor— Why, where have you been these twenty long years?"

Rip's story was soon told, for the whole twenty years had been to him but as one night. The neighbors stared when they heard it; some were seen to wink at each other, and put their tongues in their cheeks: and the self-important man in the cocked hat, who, when the alarm was over, had returned to the field, screwed down the corners of his mouth, and shook his head—upon which there was a general shaking of the head throughout the assemblage.

It was determined, however, to take the opinion of old Peter Vanderdonk, who was seen slowly advancing up the road. He was a descendant of the historian of that name, who wrote one of the earliest accounts of the province. Peter was the most ancient inhabitant of the village, and well versed in all the wonderful events and traditions of the neighborhood. He recollected Rip at once, and corroborated his story in the most satisfactory manner. He assured the company that it was a fact, handed down from his ancestor the historian,

that the Kaatskill mountains had always been haunted by strange beings. That it was affirmed that the great Hendrick Hudson, the first discoverer of the river and country, kept a kind of vigil there every twenty years, with his crew of the Half-Moon; being permitted in this way to revisit the scenes of his enterprise, and keep a guardian eye upon the river, and the great city called by his name. That his father had once seen them in their old Dutch dresses playing at nine-pins in a hollow of the mountain; and that he himself had heard, one summer afternoon, the sound of their balls, like distant peals of thunder.

To make a long story short, the company broke up, and returned to the more important concerns of the election. Rip's daughter took him home to live with her; she had a snug, well-furnished house, and a stout cheery farmer for a husband, whom Rip recollected for one of the urchins that used to climb upon his back. As to Rip's son and heir, who was the ditto of himself, seen leaning against the tree, he was employed to work on the farm; but evinced an hereditary disposition to attend to anything else but his business.

Rip now resumed his old walks and habits; he soon found many of his former cronies, though all rather the worse for the wear and tear of time; and preferred making friends among the rising generation, with whom he soon grew into great favor.

Having nothing to do at home, and being arrived at that happy age when a man can be idle with impunity, he took his place once more on the bench at the inn door, and was reverenced as one of the patriarchs of the village, and a chronicle of the old times "before the war." It was some time before he could get into the regular track of gossip, or could be made to comprehend the strange events that had taken place during his torpor. How that there had been a revolutionary war—that the country had thrown off the yoke of old England—and that, instead of being a subject of his Majesty George the Third, he was now a free citizen of the United States. Rip, in fact, was no politician; the changes of states and empires made but little impression on him; but there

was one species of despotism under which he had long groaned, and that was—petticoat government. Happily that was at an end; he had got his neck out of the yoke of matrimony, and could go in and out whenever he pleased, without dreading the tyranny of Dame Van Winkle. Whenever her name was mentioned, however, he shook his head, shrugged his shoulders, and cast up his eyes; which might pass either for an expression of resignation to his fate, or joy at his deliverance.

He used to tell his story to every stranger that arrived at Mr. Doolittle's hotel. He was observed, at first, to vary on some points every time he told it, which was, doubtless, owing to his having so recently awaked. It at last settled down precisely to the tale I have related, and not a man, woman, or child in the neighborhood, but knew it by heart. Some always pretended to doubt the reality of it, and insisted that Rip had been out of his head, and that this was one point on which he always remained flighty. The old Dutch inhabitants, however, almost universally gave it full credit. Even to this day they never hear a thunderstorm of a summer afternoon about the Kaatskill, but they say Hendrick Hudson and his crew are at their game of nine-pins; and it is a common wish of all henpecked husbands in the neighborhood, when life hangs heavy on their hands, that they might have a quieting draught out of Rip Van Winkle's flagon.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What does the author gain for the story by describing the Kaatskill mountains?
2. What are Rip Van Winkle's principal characteristics?
3. What are Dame Van Winkle's principal characteristics?
4. Make a list of proverb-like statements that occur in the story.
5. Why does the author begin the story with several pages of description?
6. Make a list of all the persons named in the story. After every name write the characteristics of the persons. What does the list show concerning Washington Irving as a writer?

7. Why did Rip Van Winkle cultivate the habit of wandering far and wide?
8. At what point does the principal story begin?
9. Point out all suggestions of the supernatural.
10. Describe the mysterious men whom Rip meets on the mountain.
11. How does the author make the reader appreciate Rip's feelings on awaking?
12. How does the author indicate the passing of much time between Rip's going to sleep and his awaking?
13. In what respects does Rip find his familiar haunts changed?
14. How does the author satirize social conditions, both in colonial times and in the early years of the United States?
15. How does the author make the story dramatic, that is, striking in action and emotionally appealing?
16. Why does the author wait until the end of the story to explain the nature of the mysterious men whom Rip met on the mountain?
17. How does the author make the story quietly humorous?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

Around an old Dutch legend concerning the supernatural doings of Henry Hudson and his crew, Washington Irving wrote a story concerning a kindly, shiftless man, a termagant wife, and a mysterious absence of twenty years. He made his story show something of the contrast between the quiet life of colonial times and the more stirring but somewhat petty life of the early days of the United States. The author chose to write calmly and somewhat whimsically, emphasizing places and characters, and employing few incidents.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, invent a plot that will enable you to contrast two different periods of time, as seen through the eyes of a single individual. Make the central character as appealingly real as possible. Emphasize scenes, characters, and conditions more than incidents, but make at least one incident dramatic in effect.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. A pupil is taken suddenly from a school, and returns after an absence of twenty years.
2. A professor leaves his students, of whom he has various opinions, favorable and otherwise, and then, twenty years later, not having heard about any of them in the meantime, he meets them all together at a college reunion.
3. A girl is suddenly afflicted with a mental disease that makes her

oblivious to all around her for twenty years. At the end of that time she recovers her powers, and is amazed at the changes which have taken place in manners and in dress.

4. A man returns from twenty years of life in a remote land, where he was cut off from all communication with his former associates. He revisits his old-time friends and sweethearts.
5. In a kind of dream or vision, you find yourself among your classmates as they will be twenty years from now.

THE STRANGE-LOOKING MAN *

By Fanny Kemble Johnson

Fanny Kemble Johnson (Mrs. Vincent Costello) was born in Rockbridge County, Virginia, and grew up in the neighborhood of the Natural Bridge, one of the loveliest regions in the United States. In 1897 she moved to Charleston, West Virginia, where she still resides. Fanny Kemble Johnson has published many poems, has written one novel (*The Beloved Son* [1916]), and has contributed various short stories to such periodicals as the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *Century Magazine*, and *Harper's Magazine*.

A TINY village lay among the mountains of a country from which for four years the men had gone forth to fight. First the best men had gone, then the older men, then the youths, and lastly the school boys. It will be seen that no men could have been left in the village except the very aged, and the bodily incapacitated, who soon died, owing to the war policy of the Government, which was to let the useless perish that there might be more food for the useful.

Now it chanced that while all the men went away, save those left to die of slow starvation, only a few returned, and these few were crippled and disfigured in various ways. One young man had only part of a face, and had to wear a painted tin mask, like a holiday-maker. Another had two legs but no arms, and another two arms but no legs. One man could scarcely be looked at by his own mother, having had his eyes burned out of his head until he stared like Death. One had neither arms nor legs, and was mad of his misery besides, and lay all day in a cradle like a baby. And there was a quite old man who strangled night and day from having

* From *The Pagan*. Copyright, 1917, by The Pagan Publishing Company. Copyright, 1918, by Fanny Kemble Johnson. Reprinted by special permission of Fanny Kemble Johnson.

sucked in poison-gas; and another, a mere boy, who shook, like a leaf in a high wind, from shell-shock, and screamed at a sound. And he too had lost a hand, and part of his face, though not enough to warrant the expense of a mask for him.

All these men, except he who had been crazed by horror of himself, had been furnished with ingenius appliances to enable them to be partly self-supporting, and to earn enough to pay their share of the taxes which burdened their defeated nation.

To go through that village after the war was something like going through a life-sized toy-village with all the mechanical figures wound up and clicking. Only instead of the figures being new, and gay, and pretty, they were battered and grotesque and inhuman.

There would be the windmill, and the smithy, and the public house. There would be the row of cottages, the village church, the sparkling waterfall, the parti-colored fields spread out like bright kerchiefs on the hillsides, the parading fowl, the goats and cows,—though not many of these last. There would be the women, and with them some children; very few, however, for the women had been getting reasonable, and were now refusing to have sons who might one day be sent back to them limbless and mad, to be rocked in cradles—for many years, perhaps.

Still the younger women, softer creatures of impulse, had borne a child or two. One of these, borne the second year of the war, was a very blonde and bullet-headed rascal of three, with a bullying air, and of a roving disposition. But such traits appear engaging in children of sufficiently tender years, and he was a sort of village plaything, here, there, and everywhere, on the most familiar terms with the wrecks of the war which the Government of that country had made.

He tried on the tin mask and played with the baker's mechanical leg, so indulgent were they of his caprices; and it amused him excessively to rock the cradle of the man who had no limbs, and who was his father.

In and out he ran, and was humored to his bent. To one he seemed the son he had lost, to another the son he might

have had, had the world gone differently. To others he served as a brief escape from the shadow of a future without hope; to others yet, the diversion of an hour. This last was especially true of the blind man who sat at the door of his old mother's cottage binding brooms. The presence of the child seemed to him like a warm ray of sunshine falling across his hand, and he would lure him to linger by letting him try on the great blue goggles which he found it best to wear in public. But no disfigurement or deformity appeared to frighten the little fellow. These had been his playthings from earliest infancy.

One morning, his mother, being busy washing clothes, had left him alone, confident that he would soon seek out some friendly fragment of soldier, and entertain himself till noon and hunger-time. But occasionally children have odd notions, and do the exact opposite of what one supposes.

On this brilliant summer morning the child fancied a solitary ramble along the bank of the mountain-stream. Vaguely he meant to seek a pool higher up, and to cast stones in it. He wandered slowly straying now and then into small valleys, or chasing wayside ducks. It was past ten before he gained the green-gleaming and foam-whitened pool, sunk in the shadow of a tall gray rock over whose flat top three pine-trees swayed in the fresh breeze. Under them, looking to the child like a white cloud in a green sky, stood a beautiful young man, poised on the sheer brink for a dive. A single instant he stood there, clad only in shadow and sunshine, the next he had dived so expertly that he scarcely splashed up the water around him. Then his dark, dripping head rose in sight, his glittering arm thrust up, and he swam vigorously to shore. He climbed the rock for another dive. These actions he repeated in pure sport and joy in life so often that his little spectator became dizzy with watching.

At length he had enough of it and stooped for his discarded garments. These he carried to a more sheltered spot and rapidly put on, the child still wide-eyed and wondering, for indeed he had much to occupy his attention.

He had two arms, two legs, a whole face with eyes, nose,

mouth, chin, and ears, complete. He could see, for he had glanced about him as he dressed. He could speak, for he sang loudly. He could hear, for he had turned quickly at the whir of pigeon-wings behind him. His skin was smooth all over, and nowhere on it were the dark scarlet maps which the child found so interesting on the arms, face, and breast of the burned man. He did not strangle every little while, or shiver madly, and scream at a sound. It was truly inexplicable, and therefore terrifying.

The child was beginning to whimper, to tremble, to look wildly about for his mother, when the young man observed him.

"*Hullo!*" he cried eagerly, "if it isn't a child!"

He came forward across the foot-bridge with a most ingratiating smile, for this was the first time that day he had seen a child and he had been thinking it remarkable that there should be so few children in a valley, where, when he had travelled that way five years before, there had been so many he had scarcely been able to find pennies for them. So he cried "Hullo," quite joyously, and searched in his pockets.

But, to his amazement, the bullet-headed little blond boy screamed out in terror, and fled for protection into the arms of a hurriedly approaching young woman. She embraced him with evident relief, and was lavishing on him terms of scolding and endearment in the same breath, when the traveler came up, looking as if his feelings were hurt.

"I assure you, Madam," said he, "that I only meant to give your little boy these pennies." He examined himself with an air of wonder. "What on earth is there about me to frighten a child?" he queried plaintively.

The young peasant-woman smiled indulgently on them both, on the child now sobbing, his face buried in her skirt, and on the boyish, perplexed, and beautiful young man.

"It is because he finds the Herr Traveler so strange-looking," she said, curtsying. "He is quite small," she showed his smallness with a gesture, "and it is the first time he has even seen a whole man."

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Why does the author give the characters no names?
2. Why is the story so short?
3. In what respects does the story resemble a parable?
4. What does the story say concerning war?
5. What does the story do to emphasize the value of peace?
6. How many incidents appear in the story?
7. How does the author employ contrast?
8. How does the story affect the reader?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"The Strange-looking Man" is a parable, a mere incident told for the purpose of leading the reader to realize to the full the horror of war. As a parable the story is necessarily short, for otherwise its meaning might be obscured.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, invent a single incident that will point strongly to a worthy thought. Present the foundation for the incident, and then, as briefly as possible, tell the incident itself.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. A city child, brought up in a crowded tenement district, for the first time visits the country.
2. A country child, accustomed to a one-room school with few pupils, spends a day in a great city school.
3. By a freak of fate, a man who has spent most of his life as a coal-miner deep in the mines, becomes a day watchman, during the owner's absence, in a palatial residence.
4. A savage, accustomed to constant tribal warfare, is brought to your community.
5. A young person is cast among savages.

GETTING EVEN *

By Thomas Kelly

Thomas Kelly was born in Skreen, County Sligo, Ireland, in 1886. He now lives in Manchester, England, where he holds a high position in the Revenue Service. He has contributed many stories to the *Saturday Review*, the *Reader*, the *Book Monthly*, the *Manchester Guardian*, and numerous other publications.

MARTIN DEEGAN was usually rather a dry-as-dust sort of little man, with that slight leaning towards pomposity which at times affects those holding Government appointments. As post-master of Ardnaclune he seemed to enjoy his official position behind the wire grating that ran across the lower end of the counter in his shop. But he was businesslike, if somewhat curt, in dealing with the patrons of his office. His manner of saying "Yes?" to a waiting customer was not exactly a substitute for either "Next, please," or "What can I do for you?" or "Hurry along there!" Yet it succeeded in suggesting something of all three. And he dealt with his clients in a way that displayed his consciousness of the fact that at this end of the counter at least he was secure from trade rivals.

It was rather a surprise to see another side of his character in evidence as I entered the little office. A thin, frail-looking man waited with enforced patience while the postmaster stood inside the counter, holding a stamp between his thumb and forefinger. On his face was an almost malicious smile, as of one who actually enjoyed holding a bone just out of reach of a dog. "You're sure now there's nothing else

* From *The Manchester Guardian*. Copyright, 1927, by Thomas Kelly. Reprinted by special permission of *The Manchester Guardian* and of Thomas Kelly.

you'll be needing, Mr. Twomey?'' Martin was saying as I entered. ''No other kind of stamps? No penny ones? A grand design there's on them penny ones now, much nicer than the bank map of Ireland that's on the tuppeny ones; not to mention the Celtic cross on the thruppeny ones, if you wanted to send a small parcel or a heavy letther. But I think the flaming sword on the half-penny ones is the nicest of them all.''

''The one stamp is all I need now, Mr. Deegan,'' said the frail man, fidgeting from one foot to the other.

''No postal ordhers, then? I have a great run on them these times, a great run entirely. But look at the range of them I have in stock, going higher be every tanner from the sixpence to the guinea, forby you being able to stick on the odd coppers by way of stamps. Look at them, now, with the green print of 'Post Ordú Eireann' across the red or the blue of 'British Postal Order.' The green above the red, Mr. Twomey.''

''I'm not wanting any of them at all.''

''Well, what about a money ordher, then? That's a grand sort of an ordher for you, and you to be able to get it filled up for the precise sum you require, barring the old halfpenny. Aye, I think meself the money ordher was a great invention, and I'm saying that in spite of the extra work it manes for me. The filling up of forms and sending advices would scald the heart of you at times. And a lad from Dublin'd come down and ate the face off you if you med a slip of the pen with one of them. But they're grand things, and so fittable, if you know what I mane.''

''I do so, but you know very well I'm not wanting a money ordher at all.''

''Well, seeing that you're not sending your money away, then I can recommend our Saving Certificates to you. There's what you might call a gilt-edged security and no spots on it. You might get a higher rate of interest elsewhere, but nothing like the same security. And the more you lend the country the less you pay in taxes. Think of that, and buy

Saving Certificates. Safe as a bank and sound as a thoroughbred."

"Yerra, where would I get the money to buy them sort of things?"

"Then can I remind you that I sell very good stamped envelopes and postcards? Fine quality paper in them, cream-laid over best manila."

"The penny packets does all right for me."

"Oh, I nearly forgot our Savings Bank. That's a handy bank for your money. No charges for keeping your account, no stamp on a cheque when you want to draw out. No fear of an overdraft. Could you bate that?"

"Sure I don't want to bate it! What use is it to a man like myself who only gets two looks at his few coppers, as they say?"

"But every little helps to make the pile, Mr. Twomey. And isn't the Postmaster General, Mr. Walshe himself, great on the Savings Bank? He wants to see any amount of small accounts opened. He does so. And as I said, I can recommend it to you meself. . . . Well, not to-day, maybe. I suppose there's no licence you need. Dog, gun, game, wireless? No. What about our telegraph service? I could send off a wire for you red-hot be way of the telephone to the office in the town."

"Sure, I don't want the likes at all. Only the tuppeny stamp. That's all I want."

"Yes, yes, certainly. Two pence, please. Quite correct, Mr. Twomey. Quite correct. Thank you. Good day, Mr. Twomey. Good day."

The thin man went out, and the postmaster turned to me with a smiling apology.

"I thought you wouldn't mind waiting a minute or two," he said, a grim little smile flickering about his lips. "I wanted a bit of me own back off that lad gone out. . . . The last time he cut me hair he nearly talked the head off me as well. And I said to meself, 'I'll not be always in your chair, me lad!' "

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What is Martin Deegan's personality?
2. How does the nature of Martin Deegan's personality affect the force of the story?
3. What leads Martin Deegan to talk so much?
4. What makes the story humorous?
5. What makes the story a satire?
6. Why is the story so short?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"Getting Even" is a satirical sketch ridiculing a mild nuisance by "putting the shoe on the other foot." The character of the twinkling-eyed postmaster is outlined just enough to give substance to the sketch.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, invent an incident in which conditions will be quite the reverse of usual conditions, casting ridicule on any common custom.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. Two girls, imitating the manner and the speech of boys, talk about a day's experiences.
2. Two boys, imitating the manner and the speech of girls, discuss people's costumes.
3. A school-boy talks as nearly as possible in the highly Latinized vocabulary of some of the books read in school.
4. A father, who has been watching a baby in the absence of the mother, replies to a woman visitor in the type of speech the visitor uses in talking to the baby.
5. A reporter accustomed to write accounts of baseball and football games writes an account of a wedding.

THE LITTLE MASTER OF THE SKY *

By MANUEL KOMROFF

Manuel Komroff was born in New York City in 1890. He acquired his formal education in the Stuyvesant High School, New York City, and in the Sheffield Scientific School of Yale University. He became art critic for various periodicals in New York City, and later an editor and a member of the publishing firm of Boni & Liveright. He has traveled extensively in Japan, Manchuria, and China, and has written for Japanese and Chinese publications. He is a frequent contributor to American magazines, and has won high honor for the excellence of his short stories. Among his works are the following: *The Grace of Lambs* (1925), *Juggler's Kiss* (1927), *Voice of Fire* (1927), *Coronet* (1930), *The Travels of Marco Polo* (edited, 1926), *The Contemporaries of Marco Polo* (edited, 1928).

I

EVEN idiots it seems have their place and purpose in society, or as a chess player would say tapping his fingers on the board— "That pawn may cost you your queen." The little village of M—— only realized this after it was too late.

The police of M—— all knew that Peter, a half-wit, or "Silly Peter" as he was called, was perfectly harmless; even though at times he would litter the streets and market-place with bread crumbs. But the pigeons of M—— soon cleared the walks.

Peter, it seems, had at an early age dedicated his silly life to the pigeons. All his cares and sorrows were bound up in the lives of the birds. In fact it seemed as though he himself became birdlike. He could flap his arms to his sides and

* From *The Dial*, copyright, 1921, by The Dial Publishing Company, Inc. Copyright, 1922, by Manuel Komroff. Reprinted by special permission of *The Dial* and of Manuel Komroff.

produce that same dull penetrating note that was given only to this particular species of bird when they flapped their wings.

At an early age he was left without parents and managed to grow up among the horses and cows in the barns. But these larger animals were entirely out of his sphere—he did not understand them.

One day when the lad was about seven years old, the village folks suddenly noticed that he was lame. When asked about it, all he would reply was: "The pigeons made me lame."

Luba, a farmer's fat cook, once told at the market-place how Peter became lame. She told of how the boy stood on the roof of her master's barn flapping his arms in imitation of the birds encircling his head; how he sprang in the air in a mad attempt to fly, and fell to the ground. But Luba had a reputation for being a liar, and none believed her although all enjoyed listening. "Such good imagination," they would say, after she was gone.

Peter grew up a little lame, but this defect seemed only to add to his nimbleness. He could climb a telegraph pole sideways like a parrot walking up a stick. Once on top he would swing his good leg around the cross beam and wave his hat—and from below a flight of flapping and fluttering birds would arise.

In this way he lived and grew to the age of sixteen, although his small, protruding bones and round, child-like eyes kept him looking younger. Where he slept and where he ate, all remained a mystery to the village folk; but this mystery was not near as great as another—

The schoolmaster once noticed that at times the pigeons seemed all grey, and at other times the greater number of them carried large pink breasts; also at times there were few, while on other days the streets and market-place were thickly dotted with nodding, pecking birds; also that never could they find the very young ones.

It seemed as though only Peter knew the secret—but when asked about it he would show a silly grin and shy away,

pretending to be much occupied chasing the birds that ever flocked about him.

He would travel about from barn to barn collecting the feed that fell from the bins of careless animals. He would sometimes travel along the back yards, twist his mouth and call to nobody in particular: "A few crumbs for the birdies, lady?" And presently through an open window a crust would fly, and with this buried in his hat he would be off.

Only among the poor would he hobble about. He never ventured up the hill where the better people lived; and it is perhaps for this reason that he was seldom disturbed.

To himself Silly Peter was monarch of the air. In his own distorted mind he was master of all creatures that flew. Worldly cares he left to those who had inherited worldly material; as for himself, he was concerned only with the aerial strata and with the feathery creatures thereof. Nobody wanted it; so he acquired it as he acquired the cast-off hat that he wore. He fathomed it, tasted it, drank it, navigated his creatures through it, and even fanned life into it by flapping his bony arms.

He understood the air and the sky, and it all belonged to him. Every atom of sky that poured itself over the village of M—— belonged to Silly Peter. It seemed as though he purposely limped lightly over the ground that was foreign to his nature; for he was captain and master of the sky.

II

"We must first loosen the ground," said a petty officer. "If the soil is too hard, then the action will drag. And quick action and a brisk finish always make for a better picture."

"Hey, you!" commanded the Captain. "Go get another shovel and help dig."

While two soldiers stood digging in a rectangular plot in the market-place, the camera-men had set up and were adjusting a motion picture apparatus. Twenty-five feet away stood six soldiers leaning on their rifles talking and laughing.

"Enough digging!" shouted the Captain. "Turn the loose earth back into the pit." The soldiers obeyed.

"Are you ready?" he said as he turned to the camera-men.

"All ready," came the reply.

"Now," said the Captain winking maliciously to two of his men. "You run around and pick me up a beggar."

The soldiers started off, pushing their way through the sheepish crowd and into a side street. After walking a few hundred paces one remarked to the other: "When you don't need them, a hundred are upon you. When you want them—the devil take it."

At last they came upon Silly Peter and decided that he would answer.

"Come along, boy; the Captain wants you," they said, taking hold of his arms.

"Let me go!" The boy struggled. "I did nothing."

"Come along, you fool!"

They brought Silly Peter to the square, placed him on the spot that smelled fresh with upturned earth, placed a shovel in his hands and told him to dig his grave.

When they stepped aside, the terrified boy could see the camera before him and the six soldiers standing at attention a few paces away. Already the clicking handles started turning.

"Dig!" shouted the Captain.

"I don't want a grave," whimpered the frightened creature as several pigeons approached. "I don't want a grave," as he turned up the loose earth with trembling shovel-strokes. "I don't want a grave," and tears ran in trickling rivulets down his silly face.

Even an idiot could understand. At one side of him he was confronted with death for no apparent reason at all. And on the other side of him flew his pigeons.

Suddenly the signal was given; the six rifles were raised, and a volley of blank cartridges shot at the boy. The frightened birds flew into the air as the twisted frame of Silly Peter sank into the soft, upturned earth.

When the smoke had cleared, a soldier came up and shouted:

"Hey fool? Get up!—You're not dead." But the boy only sobbed, with his face beside the shovel in the fresh earth.

The soldiers were dismissed, and the Captain climbed into his carriage and drove away. The sheep-like inhabitants of the village of M—— feared to venture near the spot of military manœuvre.

Presently an old farmer, driving his horse across the square, stopped, lifted the boy, and said: "Don't cry, Peter. It is only a little joke. See, you're not dead—here, pick up your hat. See, all the pigeons are around us—you're not dead."

The boy seemed numb and twisted like the limb of a tree as the old man following his horse helped him across the market-place and through the lane.

"Don't be foolish, Peter. You're not dead. See the pigeons; see the sky. Look, here is Luba—she will bring us soup."

But the boy squinted at the sun through a film of tears and with his one-sided mouth mumbled: "I don't want a grave."

III

The Captain lit a cigarette as he leaned back in the carriage. The horses snorted as they drew up the hill. "Why," he asked himself, "are people afraid of dying? For many, life can hold little attraction, yet even an imbecile fears death as though it were the devil himself. Yet each man nurses his own pet fears."

The carriage rocked from side to side as it climbed the hill, and the Captain turned his mind to his young wife. "It's all imagination; that's what I think," he said to himself. "It's all in her mind. Now she's afraid of this and afraid of that, and in this way she worries herself ill.

"And the doctor thinks he knows it all, but he knows nothing. He should have given her iron, she's too pale. Now we shall have to call him again. It is all a trick that doctors have. Yes, each man looks out for himself. But I will call him again and say to him: 'Don't you think a little iron would be good for her, she is so pale?' And he will reply: 'Yes, it

can't harm.' But I would have to say this to the doctor when he is putting on his coat in the hallway, so that Vera does not hear.

"No. Vera must not hear that I think her pale. It would worry her and she might become worse. Then she would have to go to bed again, the doctor would come again, and the servants would do as they pleased. And Vera would grow worse and more nervous and—"

"Here we are!" called the coachman, and the Captain stepped out upon his own lawn.

The house was built of stone, and although its architecture was plain, it had the solidity of a castle. Even the vines that grew up the lattice-work and walls seemed to intertwine their curly branches into a living network that helped fortify the stone nest of the Captain and his beautiful Vera.

The lovely creature was passing her hands lightly over the keyboard of the piano as the Captain entered.

"It is only I," he called, but she was startled, nevertheless.

"I am glad you came," she said as she rose to meet him, and placing her pale head on his decorated breast added—"I am afraid to remain here alone."

"But where are the servants, my dear?"

"Oh, servants don't count."

"Well, well, my darling," spoke the Captain, petting her. "You have nothing to fear. It is all imagination."

"But I am so nervous."

"Come, my dear. Let's have tea and I will tell you a funny story."

Presently they were seated at the table drinking tea, and the Captain began his story.

"You know, my dear," he said; "we are going to put an end to all this foolish political talk and people's committees. Any beggar forms a committee, and they do what they like. Civil authorities and military authorities are all alike to them."

"Oh, I am so afraid of beggars," interrupted the beautiful Vera.

"Well, my dear; soon there will be nothing to be afraid

of; a propaganda council was organized at headquarters this morning, and what do you think? This morning two men arrived with a moving picture camera to take pictures of our orderly town, and in the afternoon we took an object-lesson picture. I marched the soldiers into the square and we dug up a plot so that the earth might be soft.

"Then we had a beggar dig his own grave as we took the picture. When he had dug enough, I gave the signal and the firing squad drew up their rifles and blazed away."

"Why did you kill him?"

"No, my dear; we only pretended to kill him. I myself was careful to see that the leads were taken off the cartridges. But you see we could not tell the beggar that he was not going to die, because we wanted to make the picture look realistic—he might have run away in the middle and ruined the film.

"Well, my dear, to make a long story short, the fool beggar fell into the pit, believing himself really killed. It will make a fine picture. It will be shown in all the surrounding towns as an object lesson, and before the picture itself appears on the screen it will be entitled—I suggested it myself—it will read— 'This is what happened to a fool who thought he could oppose the military authorities,' and then will be shown the picture of the beggar digging his own grave.

"It will be a great lesson and education to the people whose heads have been turned. It will be sent all over the country and if the results are favorable and it pleases headquarters who can say," at this point he clasped his wife's pale hand, "who can say that I will not receive another decoration, or perhaps a promotion? Who can tell, my dear? Things move so quickly these days."

In the evening as they were eating, Vera looked up from her plate and spoke: "You know, if it happened to me, I think I should die."

"Don't talk nonsense," replied the Captain, angered by the idea. "How could it happen to you?"

"Well, supposing the revolutionists took control, and then—"

"Supposing! Supposing the sky should fall," he interrupted, and smiled on his lovely and delicate Vera.

IV

Silly Peter refused to eat the bowl of soup that Luba placed out for him, but he went aloft in the barn and cried in his dull, monotonous tone: "I don't want a grave—I don't want a grave," until he fell asleep.

Then over his simple, slumbering brain came a vision.

He saw himself standing on an elevated place and over him rested the great ultramarine dome of sky. About him he could see the horizon as though it were a white circle of foam.

Gradually this circle grew smaller and smaller and rose up like a sparkling and living halo. As it came nearer, he discovered that the circle was composed of hundreds of white doves.

Soon they were close over him and circling the elevation on which he stood, and he could hear the wild beating of the wings as though they were rolling a tattoo on muffled drums. Then suddenly the circle broke, and rose like a puff of smoke against a sky of blue.

With startling rapidity it rose until it rent and perforated the sky, and was lost from sight. Only a large oval opening of light-grey nothingness remained over-head—a hole in the sky—an opening to heaven.

Then from all quarters came a loud uproar; a thousand piercing, whistling yells; a rackety, rumbling, rattling commotion mixed with the beat and swish of wings. This was followed by an upward rush which darkened the sky.

Peter saw himself standing like a monarch reviewing his nation from an elevated platform. Around him flew the feathered tribes of the air. From the fluttering starling to the giant albatross, all were liberated and each paid homage to him—the master of the sky, before they shot upward and through the oval opening in the rent heaven. It was a grand and colorful sight to behold.

Finally they were all gone and he saw himself take a last

look about him as he stood alone on his elevation. He then craned his neck and turned his face to the oval nothingness —flapped his arms, and with a thrilling sensation flew heavenward. His body went through the air a little sideways—but it flew, and the rest did not matter.

Poor Peter awoke to find himself in the loft of the barn among his cages of pigeons, confronted with the sordidness of material reality. He opened a small window and then flung open the cages.

Through the night he limped from barn to barn, darting under wagons, and between the legs of slumbering horses, opening doors, boxes, and even barrels. He was liberating the imprisoned, full-breasted creatures.

The little village of M—— slept soundly as it was being flooded with fluttering birds. Only the hypersensitive Vera was disturbed by the monotonous beating of restless wings.

No longer was there any mystery regarding the pigeons.

V

In the morning the streets were covered with pink-breasted birds as well as grey. Besides this, there were breeds and species of pigeons that the villagers of M—— had never seen before. Wherever one turned, one saw pigeons. They were on the ground and in the sky, as well as upon the roofs. Their colors were mixed, and their leaders were lost.

Silly Peter ran joyfully about the streets waving a little white flag at the disorganized flying tribes, waving a white flag as though it were a truce to the sky.

For some reason or other, an extra large number of birds took refuge on the gable and chimney of the Captain's stone house on the hill.

Late in the afternoon, as the charming Vera was playing at the piano, a dark shadow crept over her page of music, and this was accompanied by a scrambling noise from outside. As she turned about, she could see through the corner of her eye a struggling figure across the window, clambering on the vines. The body was silhouetted against the sky.

One glance was sufficient—her throat let loose a piercing scream as she ran from the room into the kitchen. "A man! A man is climbing up the house—quick, send for the police!" she shouted breathlessly to the servants.

Holding her throbbing temples with both hands, she waited with the servants in the kitchen. Soon two policemen arrived, having been told that a robber had entered the house, but they found nothing excepting Silly Peter on top of the roof, propped against the chimney, waving his flag and signalling to his birds.

"He's harmless," said the officer. "I can't make him come down, madam. I'm a policeman, not a fireman." And with this they went away, leaving Vera with her servants and Peter with his pigeons.

Presently the Captain came home, raved and shouted as he swung his arms—but Peter sat with his back against the chimney, making bubbles with his mouth and holding two new-born birds close to his face in order that they might prick the bubbles with their little soft beaks and drink.

"Come down from my house, you beggar!" But this did not even frighten the birds that flocked about Silly Peter in ever increasing numbers.

At length he came into the house, and took a rifle from his case. "Just wait till it grows dark," he mumbled. But the lovely Vera jumped from her chair and, with tears in her eyes, cried: "No! No! God will see you. He will never forgive us. After all, what harm does the boy do? He did not intend to frighten me, I am sure. Put it away, my dear—God will never forgive us if you don't."

Who could resist a pleading tear from lovely Vera? Surely not the Captain.

"You are right, my dear. He can do us no harm," he finally allowed.

At night there was a noise and commotion on the roof. Vera awoke, but then all was silent again. A fearful silence hung over the house, interrupted only by the heavy breathing of her devoted soldier husband.

She remained awake until morning and was glad when she heard the servants stir. Then thinking that a little music might be restful, she dressed herself lightly and went down to the drawing room, opened the piano and finally opened the shutter. There beneath her on the ground lay Peter, with his face up—dead. His round child-like eyes stared heavenward as his birds sat about in mournful groups of twos and fours.

The unfortunate Vera again rushed into the kitchen and sent for the police before she ran, terrified by the sight she had just beheld, to awaken her husband. In about an hour, although it seemed longer, the poor folk of the village arrived and carried the body from the yard. Fat Luba insisted upon halting the procession long enough so that she could kiss the white forehead of the little dead master of the sky. A ring of pigeons swirled around the procession as it marched down the hill.

Vera nursed up a little fever for herself and was put to bed, while Luba, the cook, stood in the market-place and with tears in her eyes told everybody that the Captain killed her little Major of the Birds—"and now nobody will look after them, and they will make dirt everywhere. And people will have to move away. And he is such a bad man to take the crumbs away from little doves. And if he has any children, I wish them the best of every thing for they surely will be unfortunate."

Marking the spot where Peter fell were two new-born birds crushed beside the stone house on the hill. Through the air swung a grand flight describing an oval in the sky. At each end of the oval the pigeons beat their wings as they rounded the curve. With mournful thuds they beat, as they circled over the old farmer's house and again over the solid stone house on the hill.

All day they flapped a tattoo with their wings and beat their sorrowful dead sounds into lovely Vera's ears. In the evening the Captain sent for the doctor.

All night long the uncontrollable feathery tribes encircled

the town with their monotonous beating and swishing of wings.

The next day Vera grew worse, as Luba in the market-place kept insisting that the Captain killed her Little Master of the Birds; until a committee of three working-men took it upon themselves to investigate. They started for the hill, but stopped off in order to induce the schoolmaster to join them.

The schoolmaster, however, did not allow himself to be disturbed. He was playing chess with a friend, and kept tapping the dull-sounding table with his fingers, and repeating in a monotone: "If he disturbs that pawn, he may lose his queen."

As the committee went on to the hill, they were overtaken by the doctor in his carriage. At last they arrived at the stone house and found the doctor walking briskly up and down the drawing room smoking a cigarette—he had not yet told the Captain.

Upstairs they could hear the Captain in Vera's darkened room, kneel down beside the bed.

"Do you know, my darling," he spoke. "I have never kept anything from you—but the other day when I told you about the beggar, I should have told you that he was— Are you listening, my dear? I should have told you that he was the same boy—the poor boy that lived with the pigeons.

"See; we have already been—are you listening, my dear?" God has already punished us—now you can get better and we will go away from here. We will go to some quiet place.—Are you listening, my dear? We will go to some—do you hear me, Vera? My darling girl, don't sleep now. Tell me, what did the doctor say? Wake up, Vera."—But the hand of death had already passed over Vera.

The Little Master of the Sky didn't need a grave and didn't want one. But they dug one for him just the same, at the end of the town. While his pigeons encircled the sky and swished the air, the villagers straightened his twisted, little body and slipped it into a narrow box, and lowered him down. The poor folk gave him a little grave, but he doesn't need it for he never uses it.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSIONS

1. What is the significance of the first sentence?
2. What are Peter's characteristics?
3. What unusual powers does Peter possess?
4. How does the author lead the reader to sympathize with Peter?
5. Why does the author divide the story into sections?
6. What poetic elements appear in the story?
7. What is the Captain's character?
8. How do you account for Peter's actions?
9. Why does Peter so affect Vera?
10. Why does the author mention the schoolmaster's game of chess?
11. Wherein is the story strongly suggestive?
12. Why does the author so often speak of the birds?
13. What is the author's purpose?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"The Little Master of the Sky" is a highly poetic, fanciful story full of tenderness and sympathy, based on the general thought: "That pawn may cost you your queen," that is, what seems insignificant may become all-important. The pathetic and fanciful figure of Peter, surrounded by his birds, is unique and charming. All the villagers loved him—and the reader loves him also. By various means the author brings the reader into full sympathy with the unfortunate youth, and by the same art leads the reader to be appalled by the Captain's thoughtless action rather than to detest him for cruelty. Indeed, much of the effect of the story springs from the gentle spirit that it breathes.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, invent a plot that will show the value of a trifle. Show, by a series of incidents, that what at first seems unimportant, in the end deeply affects an individual life.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. A man fails to keep an appointment.
2. A passer-by gives help to an unfortunate person.
3. An employer is harsh and unjust to an employee.
4. A boy forms a careless habit.
5. An influential man treats a foreigner with disdain.

DREAM-CHILDREN *

By Charles Lamb

Charles Lamb (1775–1834), the most delightful of English essayists, was born in London. From the age of eight until he was fifteen he was a student in Christ's Hospital, London, where he was closely associated with the future poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, then also a semi-charity student. All of his mature life Charles Lamb was employed as a humble clerk, first in the South Sea House, and then, for thirty-three years, in the East India House. Although obliged to serve in somewhat uncongenial work, and greatly afflicted by family sorrows, he made himself one of the most brilliant of English writers. His poems and essays sparkle with wit and humor, and have a delicate sentiment that makes deep appeal. Among his works are *Tales Founded on the Plays of Shakespeare* (1807, written in collaboration with his sister, Mary Lamb), *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets* (1808), and the famous *Essays of Elia* (1823).

CHILDREN love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children: to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle, or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts, till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern in-

* From *The Essays of Elia*, by Charles Lamb.

vention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining country; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C's tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish, indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry, too, of the neighborhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psaltery by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was: and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said "those innocents would do her

no harm''; and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holidays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I could never be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then,—and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew-trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass, with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings,—I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavors of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevent. Then in somewhat a more heighted tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial man-

ner she might be said to love their uncle, John L——, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out —and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries—and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a mile when I could not walk for pain;—and how in after-life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowance enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarrelling with him (for we quarrelled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he, their poor uncle, must have been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a-crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W——n; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to

them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens—when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of representment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages, before we have existence, and a name" —and immediately awakening, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor arm-chair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side—but John L. (or James Elia) was gone forever.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What is a reverie?
2. Why does the Norfolk house interest children?
3. Make a list of the characteristics of great-grandmother Field.
4. Describe the old house in which great-grandmother Field lived.
5. Make a list of all the persons mentioned in "Dream-Children." What special traits mark the various individuals?
6. Name the various incidents that are suggested in "Dream-Children."
7. What emotions does "Dream-Children" awaken?
8. What makes the conclusion effective?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"Dream-Children" is a reminiscent dream concerning places and people once dearly loved, and now changed or gone forever. It is also a pathetic vision of what might have been, had fate willed otherwise. In vague and shadowy manner, veiled in a haze of memory and tears, the story hints of incidents that it does not develop: events in the life of a stately old-fashioned lady who lived in a lonely house; the play of children in a

country place; the tragedy that came to one who had been a spirited youth; the unavailing courtship and later lonely life of the one who writes.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, think of places and people intimately concerned with your earliest days. Think also of the might-have-been, of what you might have done if you had remained in the former places; if some, now dead, had lived; if other circumstances had molded your life; if other associates had been with you. Write quietly and reflectively, without employing much dialogue and without attempting to develop vivid action. Make the story suggestive and dreamlike, and touch it with any feeling of tenderness or regret that the trend of your thinking may arouse.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. You dream of your earliest home and your first associates.
2. You dream of your first school and your first school-fellows.
3. You dream of a place where you might have lived, and of associates you might have had.
4. You dream of a friend or relative, now dead, whom you dearly loved, and vision the life he might be living to-day.
5. You dream of events and of people that might have influenced your life.

THE NECKLACE *

By Guy de Maupassant

Guy de Maupassant (1850–1893) was one of the most brilliant of French writers. All of his childhood was spent in Normandy. He served in the Franco-Prussian War, and was later employed in government offices. Early in life he devoted himself to literature. He wrote with remarkable ease and power, producing much verse, over 200 short stories, and in a period of ten years completing more than thirty volumes of writing. The last years of his life were clouded, and in 1892 he became dangerously insane.

SHE was one of those pretty, charming girls who, as if by a mistake of destiny, are born into a family of government clerks. She had no dowry, no expectations, no means of being known, appreciated, loved, and married, by any man of wealth and distinction; and she submitted to be married to an underclerk at the Department of Public Instruction.

She dressed simply, being unable to adorn herself, but she was as unhappy as a woman who has married below her station; for women have neither caste nor race, their beauty, their grace, and their charms taking the place with them of noble birth and family. Their innate refinement, their instinctive breeding, their mental adaptability are their only hierarchy, and make a girl of the common people the equal of the greatest of *grandes dames.*

She suffered constantly, feeling that she was born to enjoy all the refinements and luxuries of life. She suffered because of the poverty of her home, the bareness of the walls, the dilapidated state of the chairs, the hideousness of the materials. All these things, which another woman of her caste

* From *Little French Masterpieces,* edited by Alexander Jessup, copyright, 1903, by G. P. Putnam's Sons. Reprinted by permission of G. P. Putnam's Sons.

would not even have noticed, tortured and angered her. The sight of the little Breton maid who took care of her humble establishment aroused in her mind despairing regrets and wild dreams. She dreamed of silent antechambers, hung with oriental fabrics, lighted by tall bronze candelabra, and with two tall valets in knee-breeches dozing in spacious arm-chairs, made drowsy by the heavy heat from the stove. She dreamed of long salons furnished in old silk, with slender furniture bearing priceless trifles; and of dainty little perfumed boudoirs, made for five o'clock chats with one's closet friends, with well-known and much sought after men whose attentions all women envy and desire.

When she sat down to dine at the round table covered with a cloth that had been used three days, opposite her husband, who, as he removed the lid of the soup-tureen, exclaimed with an enchanted air: "Ah! a good old stew! I know of nothing better than that!" she dreamed of dainty dinners, of gleaming silverware, of tapestries peopling the walls with antique personages and strange birds in the midst of an enchanted forest; she dreamed of exquisite dishes served on splendid plate, of gallantries whispered and listened to with a sphinxlike smile, while you are eating the pink flesh of a trout or the wing of a chicken.

She had no fine dresses, no jewels, nothing. And she cared for nothing else; she felt that she was made for those things. She would so have liked to be attractive, to be fascinating, to be envied and sought after.

She had a wealthy friend, a former schoolmate at the convent, whom she would not go to see, she suffered so on returning home. And she wept whole days with disappointment, regret, distress, and despair.

One evening her husband came home with the air of a conqueror, holding a big envelope in his hand.

"Here is something for you," he said.

She hastily tore the envelope, and took out a printed card on which were these words:

"The Minister of Public Instruction and Mme. Georges

Ramponneau invite M. and Mme. Loisel to pass the evening at the Ministerial palace on Monday, January 18th."

Instead of being overjoyed, as her husband hoped, she tossed the invitation angrily on the table, murmuring:

"What do you expect me to do with that?"

"Why, my dear, I thought that you would be pleased. You never go out, and here is an opportunity—a fine one! I had the greatest difficulty in obtaining it. Everybody tries to get them; they are very much sought after, and not many are given to clerks. You will see the whole official world there."

She looked at him with an irritated eye, and demanded impatiently:

"What do you expect me to put on my back to go there?"

He had not thought of that.

"Why," he faltered, "the dress you wear to the theatre. It looks very nice to me—"

He paused, stupefied, beside himself, to see that his wife was weeping. Two great tears were rolling slowly from the corners of her eyes to the corners of her mouth.

"What's the matter? what's the matter?" he stammered.

But by a violent effort she had conquered her weakness, and she answered calmly, wiping her wet cheeks:

"Nothing, only I have no dress and so I can't go to this ball. Give your card to some colleague whose wife is better equipped than I."

He was in despair.

"Let us see, Mathilde," he replied. "How much will it cost, a suitable dress that you can wear again on other occasions; something very simple?"

She reflected a few seconds, making her calculations and also thinking how large a sum she could ask for without bringing forth an instant refusal and a horrified exclamation from the economical clerk.

At last she replied, hesitatingly:

"I don't know exactly, but it seems to me that I could make out with four hundred francs."

He turned a little pale, for he had set aside just that sum

to purchase a rifle and indulge in an occasional hunting-excursion, during the summer, on the plain of Nanterre, with some friends who went there on Sundays to shoot larks.

But he said:

"Very good. I will give you four hundred francs. And try to have a pretty dress."

The day of the ball drew near and Madame Loisel seemed sad, disturbed, anxious. Her dress was ready, however. Her husband said to her one evening:

"What's the matter? Tell me; you have been very queer for three days."

And she replied:

"It annoys me to have not a jewel, not a single stone, nothing to put on. I shall look as poverty-stricken as can be. I should almost prefer not to go to the ball."

"You might wear natural flowers," he rejoined. "They are very stylish at this season. You can get two or three magnificent roses for ten francs."

She was not convinced.

"No, there is nothing more humiliating than to look poor among a lot of rich women."

"How stupid you are!" cried her husband. "Go to your friend Madame Forestier and ask her to lend you some jewels. You are intimate enough with her to do that."

She uttered a cry of joy.

"That's so. I hadn't thought of that."

The next day she went to her friend's house, and told her of her trouble.

Madame Forestier went to a wardrobe with a glass door, took out a large jewel-box, brought it to Madame Loisel, opened it, and said to her:

"Take your choice, my dear."

She saw first of all bracelets, then a pearl necklace, then a Venetian cross in gold and precious stones, a beautiful piece of work. She tried them on before a mirror, hesitated, could not decide to part with them, to replace them. She kept asking:

"You have nothing else?"

"Why, yes. Look. I don't know what may take your fancy."

Suddenly she discovered in a black satin case a superb diamond necklace, and her heart began to beat with an immoderate longing. Her hands trembled as she took it up. She fastened it about her throat, over her high dress, and stood in ecstasy before her own image.

Then she asked, hesitatingly, in an agony of suspense:

"Can you lend me this, just this and nothing else?"

"Why, yes, to be sure."

She sprang upon the neck of her friend, kissed her passionately, then fled with her treasure.

The day of the ball arrived. Madame Loisel had a triumph. She was prettier than any of the others, stylish, gracious, smiling, and mad with joy. All the men stared at her, asked her name, requested to be presented. All the clerks in the Department wanted to waltz with her. The minister noticed her.

She danced madly, in a frenzy, intoxicated by pleasure, regardless of everything in the triumph of her beauty, in the pride of her success, in a sort of cloud of happiness composed of all that homage, of all that admiration, of all those newly kindled desires, of that complete victory which is so sweet to a woman's heart.

She went away about four in the morning.. Her husband had been asleep since midnight in a little, deserted anteroom, with three other gentlemen whose wives were enjoying themselves hugely.

He threw over her shoulders the wraps he had brought for her to wear home—modest garments of every-day life, whose shabbiness contrasted with the elegance of the ball-dress. She felt this and insisted on hastening away, to avoid being noticed by the other women, who were wrapping themselves in rich furs.

Loisel detained her.

"Wait a moment; you'll take cold outside. I will go and call a cab."

She would not listen to him, however, but hurried down the stairs. When they were in the street, they could find no cab;

and they set out to look for one, shouting after the drivers whom they saw passing in the distance.

They walked towards the Seine, in dire discomfort, shivering with cold. At last they found on the quay one of those ancient nocturnal coupés which are seen in Paris only after nightfall, as if they were ashamed to show their shabbiness during the day.

It took them to their door on Rue des Martyrs, and they went sadly up to their apartment. It was all over, for her. And he was thinking that he must be at the office at ten o'clock.

She removed the wraps with which her shoulders were covered, standing in front of the mirror, in order to see herself once more in all her glory. But suddenly she gave a shriek. Her diamond necklace was no longer about her neck.

Her husband, already half undressed, asked:

"What's the matter with you?"

She turned to him, half distracted:

"I have—I have—I no longer have Madame Forestier's necklace."

He sprang to his feet in dismay.

"What? What do you say? It's impossible!"

And they hunted in the folds of the dress, in the folds of her cloak, in all the pockets, everywhere. They could not find it.

"Are you sure that you had it when you left the ball?" he asked.

"Yes. I felt it in the vestibule of the palace."

"But, if you had lost it in the street, we should have heard it drop. It must be in the cab."

"Yes, that is probable. Did you take the number?"

"No. Didn't you look at it?"

"No."

They stared at each other in utter dismay. At last Loisel dressed himself.

"I am going to walk back over the whole distance we walked to the cab," he said, "to see if I can't find it."

And he left the room. She sat there in her ball-dress, with-

out strength to go to bed, cowering in a chair, without fire, without a thought.

Her husband returned about seven o'clock. He had found nothing.

He went to the Prefecture of Police, to the newspaper offices, to offer a reward; to the cab companies—everywhere, in short, that a ray of hope suggested.

She waited all day, in the same state of benumbed dismay in face of this terrible disaster.

Loisel returned at night, pale and hollowcheeked; he had discovered nothing.

"You must write to your friend," he said, "that you have broken the fastening of her necklace, and that you are having it repaired. That will give us time to turn round."

She wrote at his dictation.

At the end of a week they had lost all hope; and Loisel, who had aged five years, declared:

"We must think about replacing the jewels."

The next day they took the box that had held it and went to the jeweler whose name was inside. He consulted his books.

"It was not I who sold the necklace, madame," he said; "I simply furnished the case."

Then they went from one jeweller to another, looking for a necklace like the lost one, searching their memories, both fairly ill with disappointment and mental anguish.

In a shop at the Palais Royal they found a string of diamonds which seemed to them to be absolutely like the one they had lost. It was worth forty thousand francs, but they could have it for thirty-six thousand.

They requested the jeweller not to sell it for three days. And they bargained with him—that he should take it back for thirty-four thousand francs if the other should be found before the end of February.

Loisel had eighteen thousand francs left him by his father. He would borrow the rest.

And he borrowed, asking one person for a thousand francs, another for five hundred; five louis here, three louis there. He gave notes, made ruinous agreements, dealt with usurers,

with the whole race of money-lenders. He mortgaged the whole latter portion of his life, risked his signature without any certainty that he would be able to honor it; and, dismayed by agonising thoughts of the future, by the black poverty that was about to fall upon him, by the prospect of all sorts of physical privations and mental torture, he went to buy the new diamond necklace, and laid upon the jeweller's counter thirty-six thousand francs.

When Madame Loisel carried the necklace to Madame Forestier, the latter said to her with an injured air:

"You should have returned it sooner, for I might have needed it."

She did not open the case, as her friend dreaded. If she had discovered the substitution, what would she have thought, what would she have said? Would she not have taken her for a thief?

Madame Loisel came to know the wretched life of the needy. She made the best or it, however, at the outset, heroically. That dreadful debt must be paid. She would pay it. They dismissed their servant; they changed their lodgings, and hired an attic chamber under the eaves.

She became acquainted with the heavier kinds of housework, the odious tasks of the kitchen. She washed the dishes, wearing her pink nails away on the greasy earthenware and the bottoms of the saucepans. She washed the soiled linen, the shirts and dishcloths, and hung them out to dry on a line; she carried the slops down to the street every morning, and carried up the water, stopping on every floor to take breath. And, dressed like a woman of the common people, she went to the fruiterer's, to the grocer's, to the butcher's, with her basket on her arm, bargaining, insulted, doling out her paltry money sou by sou.

Each month they had to meet some notes, renew others, beg for time.

The husband worked evenings straightening out a tradesman's accounts; and he often copied manuscript at night at five sous the page.

And this life lasted ten years.

At the end of that time they had paid everything, everything, the charges of usurers and the accumulation of the compound interest.

Madame Loisel seemed an old woman now. She had become the strong, tough, rugged woman of impoverished households. Always unkempt, with red hands, and skirts askew, she talked loudly while washing the floors with a great splashing. But sometimes, when her husband was at the office, she would seat herself at the window and think of that evening of long ago, of that ball, at which she had been so lovely and so fêted.

What would have happened if she had not lost that necklace? Who knows? Who knows? What a strange, changeful thing life is! How little is needed to ruin or to save us!

One Sunday, when she had gone out for a walk in the Champs-Élysées, for a little recreation after the labors of the week, she suddenly observed a woman wheeling a child. It was Madame Forestier, still young, still beautiful, still fascinating.

Madame Loisel was greatly excited. Should she speak to her? Yes, to be sure. And now that she had paid, she would tell her the whole story. Why not?

She approached her.

"Good day, Jeanne."

The other did not recognize her, and was surprised to be addressed thus familiarly by that *bourgeoise*.

"But—madame," she said hesitatingly, "I don't know—You must have made a mistake."

"No, I am Mathilde Loisel."

Her friend uttered an exclamation:

"O my poor Mathilde, how you have changed!"

"Yes, I have had some very hard days since I saw you, and much suffering—and all on your account!"

"On my account? How so?"

"You remember that diamond necklace that you lent me to wear to the ball at the ministry?"

"Yes. Well?"

"Well, I lost it."

"How is that, since you brought it back to me?"

"I brought you another just like it. And for ten years now we have been paying for it. You can understand that it wasn't easy for us, having nothing. However, it is done, and I am mightily pleased."

Madame Forestier stopped.

"You say that you bought a diamond necklace to replace mine?"

"Yes. You didn't notice it! Did you? They were very much alike."

And she smiled with a proud and naïve delight.

Madame Forestier, deeply moved, grasped both her hands.

"Oh, my poor Mathilde! Why, my necklace was paste. It was worth at most five hundred francs!"

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. How is the character of the wife related to the plot of the story?
2. Comment on the contrast between the wife's way of life and her ambitions.
3. What different motives moved the husband and the wife?
4. Was the wife justified in borrowing jewelry?
5. By what means does the author compress the story so that he tells a great deal in a few pages?
6. Analyze the wife's character.
7. Should the wife have confessed at once that she had lost the necklace?
8. How does the author emphasize the conclusion of the story?
9. Name all the respects in which "The Necklace" is an excellent story.
10. How much of the effect of the story is due to the surprise of the ending, and how much to the pathos of that ending?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"The Necklace" is an impressionistic story told with a high degree of condensation, with characters outlined rather than developed, and with emphasis thrown on a sardonic caprice of fate. An undue but almost pardonable vanity leads a person who has real honesty and considerable force of character, into years of penitence and toil—for what? Apparently for nothing of real worth, but actually for the maintenance of self-

respect. The greatness of the effort and of the sacrifice, made when not strictly necessary, leads the reader to pity the person who struggles so bravely against a harsh fate. Whether by intent or not, the story indicates forcibly that simplicity and frankness have worth at all times.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, imagine a person placed under a seeming compulsion of self-defense against charges of wrong-doing. Make the end of the story show that all anxiety and effort were needless. Employ much dialogue.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. A pupil thinks that he is suspected of having cheated in an examination. He studies with extreme diligence in order to show that he has actual mastery of the subject. After months of unusual effort, he learns that at no time has he been under suspicion.
2. A man believes that he was the unintentional cause of great misfortune to another. As a means of atonement and reparation, he sacrifices everything for the benefit of the other. Then he learns that he had in no way been involved.
3 A soldier thinks that something done by him has betrayed his fellows to the enemy. He makes heroic self-sacrifice, and then learns that his former actions had in no way influenced the enemy.
4. A servant, believing that her indiscretion had led to the robbing of her employer, works for years in an effort to restore what had been stolen. She learns that her indiscretion had nothing to do with the robbery.
5. A woman, much given to gossip, believes that something that she said led to the downfall of a neighbor. She spends years in penitence, and then learns that her gossip was in no way connected with the neighbor's trouble.

GRIMALDI *

By Susan Meriwether

Susan Meriwether (Susan Meriwether Boogher) was born and educated in St. Louis Missouri. She now lives in Apple Tree Cottage, Strafford, Pennsylvania. She contributes to various periodicals.

I

ALPHONSE DURAND bowed as his patient passed into the outer room. He closed the door noiselessly, and paused a moment with his hand upon the knob before he turned again into his office. When finally he approached the desk his feet dragged woodenly, his shoulders sagged, light was gone from his eyes: it was as if a sudden blight seared the vigor of his personality.

His assistant stared at him. "You are ill, Monsieur le Docteur!"

Dr. Durand made a vague gesture. "Tired," he said, "let me be alone for a few minutes."

The younger man withdrew.

A nurse entered on noiseless feet. She regarded the doctor irresolutely. "Is there anything I can do? I've never seen you tired before." A twitch in the doctor's eyelids fascinated her; she watched the gray in his face deepen. "Shall I send the other patients away?" she asked.

The doctor was standing with tentative helplessness beside his desk.

"Shall I send the other patients away?" she repeated.

He nodded.

* From *The Junior League Bulletin*, copyright, 1926, by The Junior League Bulletin. Copyright, 1926, by Susan Meriwether. Reprinted by special permission of *The Junior League Magazine* and of Susan Meriwether.

When the nurse returned, the doctor was lying down; the girl stood looking at him; his mouth was taut, the twitch in his eyelids continued, his figure had taken on a huddled look.

"It's nothing," he said in answer to the alarm in her eyes. "Nothing,—an unusually hard day."

The girl spread a light rug over him; his hand as she brushed it felt damp and cool.

The doctor closed his eyes. Unaccustomed sensibilities seemed to be centered in his thumbs; they throbbed convulsively; they seemed to enlarge, to expand . . . and suddenly they diminished. Noises roared in his ears; the twitching in his lids annoyed him, exasperated him. It continued even when his eyes were closed.

He was barely able to control a desire to scream when the telephone rang.

"It's Mademoiselle Durand," the nurse transmitted. "She wants to know if she may stop for you. She's in the neighborhood."

The doctor opened his eyes, and the roar in his ears diminished. "Tell her, yes," he directed. After a moment he rose, stumbling a little as he crossed the room; he was almost unequal to the task of getting into his coat.

At the curb he found his daughter waiting for him; she laughed happily as he seated himself beside her. "*Mon cher!*" she said, giving his arm a little pat. And then she laughed again. The doctor looked at her: daffodils brimmed the hat she wore, but they were not more gay than the eyes below them.

"You've been to a concert, Nanette! You've discovered some new genius!" But even as he spoke, the doctor realized music had never affected Nanette in this way.

The girl smiled at him. "No," she said mysteriously, and laughed, "I haven't been to a concert." And then, "How nice you're finished so early. It was the merest chance I thought to call for you."

The doctor looked at her without answering. His lids were twitching.

"I believe you're tired!" Nanette exclaimed suddenly. Her

hand crept into his. "Will you let me prescribe for you, cure you?" she asked.

Her father closed his eyes. Weariness, like a wave, rolled over him. His thumbs were playing him tricks again, noises roared in his ears.

Nanette regarded her father for some moments in questioning indecision, genuinely worried at the grayness of his face, the pain. "I shan't chatter to him just now," she decided, and they rode in silence through the evening streets.

When they came into the library of the doctor's home, Nanette drew him to the couch. "You are to lie here," she directed, "and shut your eyes, and relax your muscles, and make your mind a vacuum, and let the music I shall play wash over you like water. Don't think about it, don't wonder what I'm playing, just let it soothe you, rest you."

Twilight was in the room, and deep shadows; the cushions his daughter piled about him were soft and relaxing; for a few moments she ran her fingers across his forehead; then she moved to the piano and began to play. Evening deepened in the room; the logs flared into embers that glowed redly; occasional lights from passing vehicles flashed themselves across the wall.

Nanette's music dripped from her fingers like water; it rippled; it curved; it spiraled; it was like spring and joy. The doctor thought of gods, and Greece, and laughter.

Presently a servant entered; he placed a small table by the fire, lighted candles, uncovered a steaming tureen.

Nanette lingered unduly on a last chord; her voice seemed part of the music when she spoke. "Dinner is here by the fire for us, father," she said.

The doctor opened his eyes. "Dinner?" he questioned vaguely.

Nanette drew his hand through her arm. "Here," she repeated, "by the fire."

Her father regarded her warmly. "I believe you know as much about . . . nerves as I do."

Nanette's finger flew to her lips. "Don't mention the hateful things," she rebuked smiling.

Dinner progressed simply to fruit. Nanette was quiet, the doctor said nothing. When they both had lighted cigarettes, and the logs were replenished, and the curtains drawn, the girl scrutinized her father. "What was I playing?" she asked. "What did it say to you?"

"I don't know that it said anything to me. I thought of gods . . . and laughter."

Nanette smiled with sudden brilliance. "But yes! I've laughed all afternoon, with the clown, Grimaldi. All Paris is laughing with Grimaldi."

"Grimaldi?" the doctor questioned. He was staring at the pulses in Nanette's throat; he decided they were like captive birds, soft and fluttery.

Nanette rose; she came very close to her father. "I've bought tickets for to-night. If you can laugh with Grimaldi, I think my cure will be complete."

Dr. Durand stared at his daughter. "I couldn't laugh at a clown to-night."

"You can laugh at Grimaldi," she urged. "He's all the wit and all the humor, he's all the laughter of all the world! You will forget fatigue . . . nerves, when Grimaldi makes you laugh."

The laughter in her eyes so close to him dazzled the doctor, confused him; he hadn't the strength to refuse. "All you are saying is nonsense, of course," he protested weakly. "However, if you prescribe Grimaldi, I shall take the dose."

. . . . . .

From behind the tall coffee pot, Nanette surveyed her father appraisingly the next morning. "You liked my medicine?" she teased.

Dr. Durand regarded her with a scrutinizing eye; the breakfast gown she wore fell away from her arms in wide sweeping sleeves; over the gayly colored china, her hands fluttered like white butterflies above a bed of flowers; her father thought that she was very beautiful as she sat opposite him in the light from a wide window; a bowl of lilies bloomed behind her—the shell-pink of her négligée warmed even their waxy whiteness; little curls seemed tangled in the

lace of her cap. "How amazingly poetic to make young girls as lovely as flowers," he thought, and wondered who would marry Nanette, and how many children she would have.

"You liked my medicine?" Nanette repeated.

The doctor's scrutiny of his daughter was interrupted while he speared a curl of unsalted butter. "I think you have the possibilities of a great neurologist," he said finally. "You saved me probably, some thing approximating a breakdown."

With a little sharp clatter, Nanette set her flowered cup into its flowered saucer. It was her turn for scrutiny. But her father's steady gaze assured her. She smiled. "Nonsense," she replied. "Grimaldi saved you!"

They both laughed.

II

Henri Le Febre quivered imperceptibly in his canopied bed as Marceau opened the door and slid noiselessly into the room. His eyelids remained closed as the servant approached, and stood regarding him with a gaze of furtive scrutiny. To Le Febre, this recurrent morning duel had become an agony; today its torture was particularly acute. Presently the servant would say, "Good-morning, Monsieur." Le Febre felt he could not again endure the words, the voice of his servant. Perhaps if he lay entirely motionless, Marceau would go away. The man in the bed was stiller than death . . . stiller than death, he thought, lying straight and stark between the perfumed sheets. And then, overwhelming agony consumed him because the stillness was not death; death which is so straight and still. Tears welled into his eyes, causing him to open them.

"Good-morning, Monsieur!" the man said, ignoring his master's tears.

The man in bed regarded Marceau in outward calm; inwardly he was in a tumult greater than if he kicked and screamed. The servant moved from the bedside.

Le Febre knew he intended to open the curtains, to admit the sunshine; he shut his eyes. Sunshine! If Marceau only knew how sunshine affected him. He thought he would scream

when Marceau reached the window; the curtain-rings scraped maddeningly against the pole, and bright sunshine streamed in. Le Febre's teeth ground together; his tongue suddenly was too large for his mouth; a choking sensation assailed him. When the incoherence of his rage had passed, he found that Marceau was arranging a breakfast tray beside him. The odor of coffee permeated the room; it sickened him, he wanted to dash the tray upon the floor, but the effort of lifting his arm appalled him.

. . . Perhaps if he stopped breathing? . . .

He was watching Marceau now, as a trapped beast watches its captor. The man lifted the coffee pot, poised it above the cup; he half-filled the cup with coffee; he replaced the coffee-pot and took up a pitcher of hot milk; its pungent aroma assailed Le Febre's nostrils; the odor of hot milk, he decided, was more nauseous than coffee. His stomach retched feebly, an inaudible groan tore through his brain.

Marceau bent above him with the steaming cup. "If Monsieur will sit up," he said.

Le Febre raised reluctant eyes to Marceau's. There was no weakening in Marceau's eyes. After an instant, Le Febre lifted his head, and managed a sip of the coffee. It was more nauseous than it smelt. His lips contracted spasmodically; he dropped back into the darkness of his pillows; but the sunshine shone through his closed eyelids; it was impossible to lose the sense of light and noise and smell and taste.

Marceau opened a newspaper; its crackle racked Le Febre with exquisite pain. Before he could recover, the servant's voice was in his ears.

"If Monsieur cares to see *Le Matin?*"

Le Febre raised his lids. From the sheet that Marceau held before him, a clown grinned into his eyes; there were streaks across the clown's cheeks, and a fan of wrinkles on his brow. Le Febre closed his eyes. Laughter, sweet laughter, raucous laughter, kind laughter, cruel laughter, laughter . . . surged about Le Febre, it pommeled him, it flayed him. Laughter! He would have stopped his ears with pillows, but the effort was

beyond him . . . laughter still tore at him, but it was abating now, subsiding, like waters after a storm. Le Febre felt himself spent, worn out, as if the echoing laughter had wrenched away his grasp on life. From beneath his closed eyelids, the sun was darker; no noises smote upon his ears; perhaps death had come to deliver him at last to still quiet darkness.

And then more raucous than file on steel, the hiss of water from a faucet mangled his momentary repose. It was time for his bath. Bath! Hot water, cold water, soap, towels, powder, razors, massage, clothes, shoes; and then the noises of the streets; the crowds of people, and always somewhere laughter.

Marceau touched him on the shoulder. "Your bath, Monsieur!"

Le Febre tottered to his feet; he clutched Marceau as he crossed the room. Steam was rising from the bathtub. It made his head swim to watch it; it spiraled vaguely and vanished futilely, like laughter.

Marceau was removing his bathrobe. As he stepped into the tub, he slipped and sat down amid a great splash. The noise set his teeth on edge, his fingernails bit into the soap. A sudden hatred of Marceau flared like blood into his brain; he would kill him if—if it were worth the effort. He stared at his valet murderously. "I shall send him away," he decided, "but not until the bath and shave are finished—there are so many things to do."

Presently Marceau opened the bathroom door for his master to emerge. Le Febre passed into the other room. "I shall dress myself, Marceau," he heard himself saying, and was conscious of blank surprise in Marceau's eyes. His clothes were laid out on the couch; the silk of his hose rasped against his hand as he drew them on. Nausea welled in him. He struggled desperately with one garter; under his fingers it pretended to be fastened, and immediately he busied himself with something else, it flew open, it seemed to be laughing at him. He looked about him furtively, laughter sounded in his ears. The garter still defied his fingers; vast weariness consumed him; it seemed to him he had been struggling for hours with

the garter. He began suddenly to cry . . . and Marceau was beside him, fastening the garter, lacing his boots, getting him into his clothes.

When he was quite finished, Marceau handed him his cigarette-case. Le Febre slipped the bauble into a pocket, and immediately regretted it. It might soothe him to smoke. He sat down abruptly, wondering whether a cigarette would be worth the effort of withdrawing the case, extracting the cigarette, lighting it, puffing it. He was lost for some time contemplating the possibilities of expending so much energy. In the end, the cigarette-case remained in his pocket.

He became conscious suddenly of the ticking of a clock. He closed his eyes against the sound, which seemed to grow louder and louder, to thunder upward in a fierce crescendo. Its tumult deafened him, dazed him, exhausted him. And suddenly it died away.

Marceau approached him. "Monsieur's appointment is for twelve o'clock." He held a hat and coat in his hands.

Le Febre looked at his servant. "I can't go to-day, Marceau."

The valet's eyes were unflinching. "Monsieur's appointment is for twelve o'clock," he repeated, and helped Le Febre to rise.

As they descended, a small child in the lift stared at Le Febre with wide unblinking eyes; she nudged her mother, and whispered to her, but when they reached the street floor, the child darted out of the lift as if she were afraid, and scampered away.

At Marceau's signal, a fiacre drew up. Le Febre allowed himself to be assisted into the vehicle; the valet murmured an address to the driver; they moved out into the traffic.

Across the Rue de Rivoli, spring sunshine glittered on a thousand dancing leaves in the Tuileries Gardens; children played along the graveled paths; old men sat huddled on the benches; beneath a budding lilac-tree, a young girl raised ecstatic eyes to the man who bent above her; out of the sky a bird winged earthward in great spirals.

The swaying motion of his cab relaxed Le Febre. Although

the sunshine was back before his eyes, and noises racked him, the crowded streets somehow were not so acute a torture as his room. When the cab stopped, Le Febre opened his eyes. A doorman helped him to alight, and presently he found himself in a splendid room where people sat waiting. A young woman approached him; she bent above him; questioned him, he thought, as if he were a child. When she had written down his name and age, she straightened up.

"The doctor will see you in a very few minutes," she murmured soothingly.

Le Febre stared after her. A crescendo of laughter roared in his ears.

III

Alphonse Durand rose as Henri Le Febre came into his office. Vigor, like a lighted lamp, shone through him. An echo of last night's laughter curved his voice as he spoke.

"Good-morning, Monsieur!" he said.

The man whom he addressed regarded him without speaking. A bare inclination of his head sufficed for greeting; his fingers were limp against the other's palm.

"Will you be seated, Monsieur."

Henri Le Febre sank into the chair drawn up beside the doctor's table.

"You wished to consult me, Monsieur?"

Henri Le Febre's lips jerked spasmodically.

The doctor squared an already precise pile of cards upon his desk; he re-adjusted a paperweight; opened and closed a drawer; consulted a notebook.

Henri Le Febre followed the doctor's maneuvers with abject eyes; he was not insensible of gratitude.

"You wished to consult me?" Dr. Durand said again, and laying aside the notebook, turned to Le Febre.

Le Febre was unable to control the jerking of his lips. "Yes," he answered finally. "I—something is wrong—"

The doctor swung back in his chair, he half-shut his eyes that he might concentrate on what his patient would tell him.

How many years had he listened thus, with half-shut eyes, while men and women described their strange ills, their tortured nerves! They came to him from all parts of the world, abject and groveling, products of a monstrosity called civilization. And yesterday his nerves had played him tricks. "Sooner or later," the doctor thought grimly, "it is a question of 'physician, heal thyself' " . . . and irrelevantly, the face of the clown, Grimaldi, was before him, laughter was in his ears. With an effort he refocused his attention.

Henri Le Febre was floundering helplessly. "Things won't get done. I can't fasten my garters. My tongue seems too big —it's crowded in my mouth. I have been trying for three weeks to finish a letter. Strange noises roar up in my ears, and diminish. . . . There is always somewhere the sound of laughter."

In Henri Le Febre's gaze was overwhelming supplication; as he stared at the doctor, he was more abject than if he had cast himself upon his knees.

Dr. Durand opened his half-shut eyes; he tilted forward into an upright position, regarding the man before him with a long keen look. He noted Le Febre's tongue was scalloped with the imprint of his teeth. Suddenly revulsions swept him, Le Febre's under lids were twitching: it recalled the twitch in his own lids last night. Disgust inundated him: would they never cease, these nervous wrecks, with twitching lids and morbid perceptions and supplicating eyes? The air about him seemed filled with supplicating eyes; all the thousands he had helped or tried to help closed in on him. He put his hand before him to shut out the crowding eyes, he would have risen with a terrific outraged gesture, but suddenly the fatigue of yesterday engulfed him.

His eyes became as smolderingly dull as Le Febre's, as supplicating.

Remote laughter mocked him.

"What can you do for me?" Le Febre was asking. Even as he spoke he recoiled in momentary bewilderment at the incredible change that came into Durand's face; for an instant he dismissed as a prank of his imagination the blight that

seared the man before him. And then the perceptions of sensibilities acute as his, raw to the quick, tore his incredulity to tatters. For an instant the realization of Durand's collapse, like appalling calamity, steadied him.

"What can you do for me?" he repeated mechanically, remembering that for months he had put off this visit to the great neurologist; for months, against extremity, he had hoarded the belief that Durand could help him.

If the doctor realized to the ultimate the implication of the thing that had befallen him, Le Febre realized only that the man to whom he had come for help was hardly less desperate than himself.

They were staring at each other with the elemental hatred of rats caught in the same trap.

Terror clutched Le Febre, rage.

With a gigantic effort, Durand began to speak, his voice was rough-edged with control. "I can do little for you, except prescribe rest. You must not worry."

Le Febre got to his feet. Laughter in a wild crescendo rose about him. He reached the door.

Durand detained him with a vague gesture. "There is a clown, Grimaldi, who is convulsing Paris."—The doctor seemed to be shouting. "Go to see him . . . he'll help you . . . make you laugh."

Le Febre paused on the threshold. About him, the crashing laughter diminished and died. The silence frightened him. "I am Grimaldi," he said.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. How does the author lead the reader to appreciate Grimaldi's power?
2. What contrast exists between Nanette and her father?
3. Why does the author present so many details concerning Nanette and her father?
4. What is the function of the first section of the story?
5. In what respects are section one and section two parallel?
6. Why does the author pile detail upon detail to indicate Le Febre's nervous condition?
7. Why does the author so frequently mention laughter?

8. What is the effect of confronting Dr. Durand and Le Febre with each other?
9. How does the story emphasize the theme: "Sooner or later it is a question of 'Physician, heal thyself' "?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"Grimaldi" is an ironic story emphasizing the fundamental weakness of mankind: sooner or later every person, whatever strength or joy he may give to others, comes himself to a time of need. The art of the story lies in its accumulation of detail for the purpose of emphasis; in its parallelism in presenting the story of Dr. Durand and the story of Grimaldi, the clown, and in its effective climax brought about by the sudden meeting of Dr. Durand and Grimaldi, each with a sudden realization of the other's need. In the story is all the intense irony expressed in the words, "He saved others; himself he cannot save."

In order to write a somewhat similar story, present, in a kindly but ironic vein, any situation in life that will show, in place of accustomed strength, elemental weakness. In order to develop irony to the fullest extent, pile detail upon detail; show two contrasting characters in parallel situations, and show each confronted by realization of the other's weakness.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. A boy, despairing of success in a coming examination for graduation, goes for help to a teacher, whom he finds equally nervous before an examination for a higher degree.
2. A child who has done wrong confesses to his father at a time when the father fears arrest for a slight offense against the law.
3. Two children who have quarreled lay their dispute before an adult who is planning to bring one of his neighbors into court.
4. A wife who has overdrawn her husband's bank-account tells the husband about it at a time when he himself has appropriated some of his employer's money.
5. A girl who has broken a treasured vase belonging to her mother tells her mother what has happened, at a time when the mother has just wrecked her husband's automobile.

THE MAN WITH THE GOOD FACE*

By Frank Luther Mott

Frank Luther Mott, director of the School of Journalism of the University of Iowa, was born in Iowa in 1886. He studied in Simpson College, the University of Chicago, and Columbia University. In recent years he has been a frequent contributor to magazines. Among his works are *The Literature of the Iowa Pioneer* (1924) and *Rewards of Reading* (1926).

A SUBWAY express train roared into the Fourteenth Street Station and came to a full stop, and the door slid open. It was just at the lull of traffic before the rush of the late afternoon, and the cars were only comfortably filled. As the train stopped, a small, unobtrusive man, sitting near one end of the third car, quickly rose from his seat on the side of the car facing the station platform, and peered through the opposite windows. All the way up from Wall Street this little man had sat quietly observing through his deep-set grey eyes every man or woman who had entered or left the car. His figure was slight, and the office-pallor that overspread his serious face seemed to give to his eyes a singular intensity of gaze. Now he peered intently out at the people on the Fourteenth Street platform.

Suddenly his eyes dilated; he leaned toward the window, and raised both hands as if to shade his eyes. Then he turned and ran toward the door, which was sliding shut. The little man's face was white as chalk; his eyes were round and blazing with excitement. Against the protests of the guard, he squeezed through the door and made his escape just as the train was beginning to move. Heedless of the commotion he

* From *The Midland*, A Magazine of the Middle West. Reprinted by special permission of Frank Luther Mott, and of *The Midland*.

caused, the man dodged wildly across the platform toward a local which stood there, gongs ringing and doors closing. For all his haste, the little man was too late to enter. He pounded on the glass of one of the closed doors imperiously.

"Next train," said the guard shortly.

"Let me on!" demanded the little man, waving his arms wildly. "Let me on! You have time!"

"Next train," repeated the guard.

The train began to move swiftly. The little man ran alongside, peering in through the windows at something or somebody inside.

"Look out!" called the guard, watching him.

The man, however paid no attention to the warning. It is strange that he was not hurt as he ran blindly alongside the train. Perilously near the end of the platform he stopped short and put his hand to his head. The train thundered away, its colored rear-lights vanishing far off in the black tunnel. Oblivious to the interest of the spectators, oblivious to all the hurrying and running and crowding as other trains roared into the underground station, the little man leaned limply against a pillar.

"He's gone!" he muttered to himself. "He's gone!"

For upward of twenty years Mr. James Neal had been a clerk in the offices of Fields, Jones & Houseman on Lower Broadway. Every day of these twenty-odd years, if we except Sundays, and holidays, Mr. Neal had spent an hour and a half on Subway trains. An hour and a half every day for more than twenty years he had spent in the great underground system of the Interborough. Its ceaseless roar benumbed his senses as he was hurtled from the Bronx, where he had a room, to the Imperial Building, where he worked, and back again. This, as he had often computed, amounted to fifty-eight and a half working days each year, or about two month's time. Such was the fee he paid to Time for the privilege of using other hours for working and living. It had seemed a cruel loss at first—this hour and a half from every working day—but that was in the early days of his experience in the city. Then he had been driven by boundless

energy and hope—the same energy and the same hope that had brought him here from his little mid-western community in the first place. Year by year, however, as custom calloused him to the only part in life he seemed fit to play, he forgot about the waste of time in the Interborough cars. Destiny, he said to himself, had hollowed out the Subway as the rut in which his life was ordained to travel; Destiny had condemned him inescapably to an underground roar.

He never confessed to anyone that he held the Subway as the sign and symbol of the rut into which his life had grown. There was, indeed, nobody to whom he might impart such thoughts as he had about the deeper meanings of life. When Mr. Neal first came to Fields, Jones & Houseman's, timid and green from the country, he had been repelled by the lack of interest in his new problems on the part of his fellow clerks, and he had then put on for the first time that armor of indifference which now clung to him with the familiarity of an accustomed garment. Nor did he feel a greater kinship with the family in the Bronx with which he lodged. They were at pains not to annoy him; he kept apart from them.

Perhaps the pallid little clerk with the large grey eyes would have become very lonesome if he had not eventually found a real interest in life. This, then, was the manner and substance of his finding.

As he traveled back and forth on the Subway morning and evening, day in and day out, week after week, he wasted the hours much more completely than most of his fellow-travelers. The average Subway passenger reads his newspaper and forgets the world; he knows by some sixth sense when the train has arrived at his station, and only then does he look up from his reading. Mr. Neal seldom read newspapers. The blatancy, the crassness, of the daily prints revolted him. Perhaps there was another reason, too, which Mr. Neal himself did not realize; perhaps the settled selfishness which his manner of life had fixed upon him had destroyed a natural craving for the so-called "human interest" that is spread over the pages of the journals of the metropolis. He despised the little brawls aired in the papers, the bickerings of politics,

the fights and strikes and broils of all humanity reflected in daily mirrors.

Self-deprived of the newspaper, it was natural that he should fall to watching the people on the cars. He got to studying faces. At first he did it unconsciously, and he had probably been analyzing features idly for years before he discovered and fully realized how extremely interesting this occupation was becoming. One half-holiday he went up to the library and read a book on physiognomy, and after that he laid out his course of study carefully, classifying and laying away in his memory the various types of faces that he saw. He pursued his investigations in the detached, careful spirit of the scientist, but as time passed he was absorbingly interested. Every morning and every evening he worked in his laboratory —the Subway trains.

He never had to stand up in the cars, for he boarded them, whether at one end of his trip or the other, before they were crowded; but as soon as crowds began to fill up the aisles he always gave up his seat. This naturally gained him repeated credit for courtesy, but the real reason for his apparent gallantry was that he could not see people's faces when he was sitting while others stood in the aisles. But when he hung to a strap and looked at the window in front of him, the blackness outside combined with the bright light of the car to make the glass of the windows an excellent mirror to reflect the faces of those who stood near him.

To classify faces according to nationality was not easy in the polyglot crowds of this East Side line. But Mr. Neal devised many schemes to help him. He watched the papers they read: everybody read papers! He even ventured, when greatly curious, to ask a question of the object of his interest, so that the man might reveal his origin. Usually he was rebuffed, but sometimes he was successful. He read all the books on immigrants he could get his hands on. More than once he even followed a rare specimen—shadowed him to his work and there made guarded inquiries. Such investigations had several times made him late to work, so that his chief had made sarcastic remarks. The chief clerk at Fields, Jones &

Houseman's was a tall gaunt, old-young man with a hawk-like nose that carried eye-glasses perched perilously astride it, and he had a tongue that spit caustic. But the chief clerk's ugly words did not annoy Mr. Neal if his inquiry had been successful.

At length he became so skilful that he could separate the Slavic types into their various nationalities, and he could tell Polish, Lithuanian and Roumanian Jews apart. He could name the provinces from which Italians and Germans came with few errors.

But the most interesting set of categories according to which he filed away the various faces he saw was that of their ruling passions. There was the scholar, the sport, the miser, the courtesan, the little shopkeeper, the clerk, the housewife, the artist, the brute, the hypocrite, the clergyman, the bar-hound, the gambler. The charm of this classification was that the categories were not mutually exclusive, and permitted infinite variation.

Mr. Neal became as devoted to this fascinating game as ever any enthusiast has been to billiards, golf, baseball or poker. He looked forward all day, while in the midst of the ancient grind of Fields, Jones & Houseman, to the moment when he could establish himself in a position of vantage on a Subway car, and get back to his study of faces. All night long he dreamed of faces—faces wise and foolish, good and evil.

Yet more and more the ugliness in the Subway faces oppressed Mr. Neal. Sometimes he looked into faces loosened by liquor and saw such an empty foulness looking out at him that he was heart-sick. Then he would look at all the faces about him and see sin in manifold guise marking all of them. The sodden eyes of disillusion, the protruding underlip of lust, the flabby wrinkles of dissipation, the vacuous faces of women: it was a heart-breaking picture gallery.

Every face was stamped with the little passion peculiar to it—the mark of its peculiar spirit. The mouths, especially, betrayed the souls within. Somewhere Mr. Neal had once read weird stories of souls seen to escape from the bodies of dying

persons, and always they had been seen to issue from the open mouths of the corpses. There was a singular appropriateness in this phenomenon, it seemed to Mr. Neal, for the soul stamped the mouth even before it marked the eyes. Lewd mouths, and cunning mouths, and hateful mouths there were a-plenty. Even the mouths of children were old in evil.

"I'm sorry I've learned it," breathed Mr. Neal one day. "Now I must always look into a man's soul when I look into his face."

It was true. Men who could hide secret sins from bosom friends—even from their wives—were defenseless against this little clerk hanging to a strap—this man with the serious pale face and the large grey eyes who had learned by years of systematic observation to pierce every barrier of reserve.

His study and classification went on for several years before it occurred to him that there was one kind of face that he never saw—one type that he never found in all the Manhattan crowds. When he had first discovered that this face was missing he had called it "the good face"; and though he realized the insufficiency of this designation he could not think of a better, and the term stuck. It was not that he never saw faces with good qualities stamped upon them: he sometimes saw faces marked with benevolence, honesty and resolution, for example, and these were all good faces in a way. But they were not what Mr. Neal was looking for—what he searched for more intently with the passing months. He remembered the face of his own mother dimly through the years; it was a little like what he wanted to see here in the Subway. He searched for simplicity, for transparent truth, for depth of spirituality, for meek strength and gentle power. But simplicity in the Subway? Guileless transparency of any sort? Spirituality? Mockery!

The face he never saw became an obsession with Mr. Neal. He hunted for it in various parts of the city. He tried the Broadway line of the Subway, where the faces are notably pleasanter, more prosperous, and smugger. But neither there nor about the Universities on Morningside Heights and on the banks of the Harlem, nor in Brooklyn, nor anywhere he

looked, did he find the face he sought. He could always see it when he closed his eyes. At night he dreamed of it continuously—of meeting it on the Subway and looking into eyes of ineffable kindness.

It came finally to affect his life—this search for the unseen face. It gradually altered his attitude toward all his Subway folk. He came to have a great pity for the ignorant, and pain filled his heart at all the marks of Cain he saw. He came to have an inexpressible hunger for the sight of spiritual quality lighting the faces of the people of the Subway crowds. He did not express his hunger in words, as people do when they want to make a thing definite and tangible. It was perfectly clear and distinct to him when he closed his eyes; then he saw the Face.

The time came when Mr. Neal could not sleep of nights for the evil faces that leered at him from every side out of the darkness. It was only when he slept that he could see, in his dreams, the "good face." Finally, he was driven to make a resolution. He would consciously seek for the good faces; the evil ones he would pass over quickly. Thenceforward he was happier. As his train roared through the tunnels of night under New York, his eyes dwelt most upon the faces that were marked, however lightly, with the qualities that reached their united culmination in the "good face." He found his old faith in the perfectibility of man renewed, and often he would keep his eyes closed for many minutes together, so that he could see the face of his dreams.

So months went on, and joined together into years.

Then, one day in the Subway, with his eyes full open, James Neal suddenly saw the Face! He had been going home from work in the evening quite as usual. The express train on which he was riding was about to leave the Fourteenth Street Station when a tall man who was about to enter the local train standing at the other side of the station platform turned and looked directly at him. Mr. Neal's heart almost stopped beating. His eyes were blinded, and yet he saw the Face so distinctly that he could never forget it. It was just as he had known it would be, and yet gentler and stronger.

A moment Mr. Neal stood spell-bound. The door of his own car was sliding shut; he leaped toward it, and, as we have already seen, squeezed through and ran toward the other train. Though he was too late to get in, still he could see the Face within the moving car. Thinking about it later, as he did very, very often, he realized that he could not tell how the man with the "good face" was dressed; he could see only his face, and that for a moment only, as the local moved swiftly out of the station. Suddenly he found himself alone and disconsolate.

He went home sick in spirit. As he lay in his bed that night, trying to go to sleep, he said to himself that if ever he should see the Face again—and he prayed that he might—no merely physical barriers should keep him from seeking out the rare spirit that animated such features. Ah, but it had been much even to have seen that Face; even that had been worth living for. At last he fell asleep peacefully.

The next morning Mr. Neal entered upon a new life. He had seen the Face; it had not been a dream after all. He felt young again—not young with the ambition he had once felt so strongly, but glad and cleansed and strengthened by a sure faith in the supremacy of truth and goodness in the world. A happy smile lighted his serious face that morning; a faint flush touched the pallor of his cheeks; and his deep grey eyes were unusually luminous.

Even the roar of the Subway did not pull his spirits down, and when he briskly entered the office of Fields, Jones & Houseman, the old-fashioned high desks and stools and all the worn, dingy furniture of the room seemed to the little clerk with the shining face to be strangely new. The chief clerk, sitting at a dusty roll-top desk in the corner, looked up at Mr. Neal sharply as he entered. The chief clerk always looked up sharply. There was a preternatural leanness about the chief clerk which was accentuated by his sharp hawk's nose, and when he looked up quickly from his position hunched over his desk, his sharp little eyes pierced his subordinate through and through, and his glasses, perched halfway down his nose, trembled from the quickness of his movements.

"Morning!" he said briefly, and dived down again into his work, with his shoulders humped.

But Mr. Neal was more expansive.

"Good morning!" he called, so cheerily that the whole office felt the effect of his good humor.

A young man with a very blond pompadour was just slipping into a worn office coat.

"Well, Mr. Neal!" he exclaimed. "I swear you're getting younger every day!"

Mr. Neal laughed happily as he changed his own coat and climbed upon his familiar stool. His desk neighbor turned and regarded him good-naturedly.

"He'll be running off and getting married pretty soon," prophesied the neighbor, for the benefit of the whole office force.

Mr. Neal laughed again.

"You're judging me by your own case, Bob," he rejoined. Then in a lower tone, "That romance of yours, now—how is it coming?"

That was enough to cause the young man to pour into Mr. Neal's willing ear all the latest developments of his acquaintance with the only girl in the world.

For a long time Mr. Neal lived in daily hope of seeing the Face again. He got into the habit of changing to a local at Fourteenth Street because it was at that station he had seen the Face before, but he caught not a glimpse of any face resembling the one that he could see at any time he closed his eyes. Yet he was not discouraged. He was happy, because he felt that something big and noble had come into his life—that now he had something to live for. It was only a question of time, he told himself until he should find the Face. It was but a question of time—and he could wait.

So the weeks and months passed by. Mr. Neal never relaxed his search for the Face; it had become a part of his life. There was no monotony in his great game. He always found new faces interesting to classify, some unusual combination, some degree of emotional development he had not seen before. But *the* Face never.

Until one Saturday half-holiday in December. This is the way it happened.

Mr. Neal employed this particular half-holiday at Columbus Park. Long ago he had found this park, adjoining Chatham Square and near Chinatown, Mulberry Bend and the Bowery, a great gathering place for the lower types of humanity, and such half-holidays as he did not spend at the library studying Lombroso, Darwin, Piderit, Lavater, and other physiognomists, he usually employed at Columbus Park. Sometimes he wandered over to Hester Street, or up Orchard or some other Ghetto street off Delancey, or sometimes he spent a few hours in Battery Park or in the tenement district of the lower West Side. On this particular Saturday he found Columbus Park less populous than it had been on his last visit a month before, for many of its habitues had sought warmer climes. The weather was seasonably cold, and Mr. Neal felt really sorry for some of the old, broken-down men and women he saw.

Toward the end of the short December afternoon, he found an old man, shaking with the cold, huddled up on one of the benches of the park. The haggard, unshaven face told the usual story of the derelict, but something in the face—perhaps the abject fear that glowered in the eyes—sounded before he knew it the depths of pity in the little clerk's heart. Mr. Neal tried to talk to him, but there was no ready beggar's tale to be poured into the ears of benevolence; there was only fear of the cold, and of misery, and of death. Yielding suddenly to an impulse so strong that it bore down all thoughts of prudence, Mr. Neal slipped out of his own overcoat and put it about the man's threadbare shoulders, and then hurried off toward the Worth Street Station of the Subway.

The wintry breeze chilled him as he hastened along, a slight figure in worn business suit, leaning against the wind, but his heart was warm and light within him. Down he hurried into the Subway station, and dropped his tithe of tribute into the multiple maw of the Interborough. The train was thundering in, its colored lights growing momentarily brighter as they came down the black tunnel. The train was

crammed to the doors, for it was the rush hour and even down here the trains were crowded. Mr. Neal edged into the nearest door and then squirmed over to a place against the opposite door in the vestibule, where he could see people as they came out.

The train shot again into the dark tunnels. A thousand men and women were being hurtled at terrific, thundering speed, by some strange power but half understood, through the black corridors of the night that reigned under old Manhattan, to some unseen goal. It was magnificent; it was colossal; but it was uncanny. Mr. Neal had always been moved by the romance of the Subway, but tonight, in his elevation of spirit it seemed something of epic quality, full of a strange, unreal grandeur. Faint red lights here and there revealed nothing of the tunnel; they but lent mystery to dimly seen arches and darkling bastions, fleeting by the roaring train.

They stopped a minute at Canal Street, and more people pushed into the overcrowded car, and then the train was off again. The man pushing against Mr. Neal was heavy-jowled as a prize-fighter, but if ever he had followed the ring his fighting days were over now. Good feeding had done for him; he breathed heavily in the fetid atmosphere of the car. He was almost squeezing the breath out of the little man with a heavy red mustache who stood just behind him. The red mustache made the little man's face seem out of proportion; there was not enough of chin to make a proper balance.

At Spring Street two women struggled to get off.

"Let 'em off!" came the familiar admonition of the guard.

Those about the women made every effort to give them room, but at best they had a hard fight to make their way out. Both the women were modishly dressed, and their complexions were correctly made. There was, too, that hardness about the mouths of both of them that Mr. Neal found in the faces of most of the women he saw—a hardness that even the stress of their effort to get out of the car could not disturb. When they finally got out, others crowded in.

Mr. Neal was happy, and he looked about him to find other happy faces. But they were nowhere to be seen; the faces

were stolid, or indifferent, or intent, or vacuous. None of them were glad. If their mouths would only turn up at the corners! Well, it was the same old story. Mouths that turned up at the corners were seldom met with in Mr. Neal's book of Subway faces.

Bleecker Street, and a worse jam than ever, but there was encouragement in the thought that Fourteenth Street would soon relieve the pressure. Two girls crowded on at Bleecker, amid shrill laughter and many smothered exclamations. Their lips were carmined and their eyes bold. Every swerve of the train brought fresh giggles or stifled screams from them.

As the train was slowing down for Astor Place Station, an express train passed it, speeding for Fourteenth Street. Mr. Neal turned with an effort (for he was wedged in tightly) and looked through the glass door at the brightly lighted cars as they passed, and then slowly gained upon, his own train. The express was crowded too, with people standing in the aisles, hanging to straps. The faces were very clearly distinguishable in the bright light; and Mr. Neal, strangely excited at this rapid panorama of faces, saw each one distinctly. Suddenly he leaned forward, close to the glass. He saw it! The Face! It was there! But it was gone in a moment. It had been like a flash in the dark tunnel. His own train had come to a jarring stop, and the express was only thunder in the distance.

Mr. Neal felt that he must rush out of the car, must get out into the open. But the big prize-fighter still pressed against him, and in a moment they were rushing on again into the darkness.

Now the clerk had no eyes for the occupants of his car. His face was pressed against the glass door. He saw, out there in the darkness, that serenely beautiful Face, beatific, transcendent. And even as he looked, he saw again the rear lights of the express. They were going to overtake it—to pass it again! It had been halted by the block signals of the train ahead, perhaps; at any rate, it was now moving very slowly. As the local shot by, the panorama of faces was unfolded much more rapidly that it had been before, but Mr. Neal

caught a glimpse of the Face once more. It looked directly at him, as it had before, and he thought it smiled upon him a little.

The little clerk was greatly excited. As soon as the local had came to a stop at the Fourteenth Street Station and the doors had been opened, he darted out and hurried to the other side of the platform, There he stood leaning out to watch for the approach of the express. In a moment it came, rumbling in quite as usual, mechanically and regularly, and the doors slid open to allow the flood of people to pour out. Mr. Neal squirmed through the crowd, looking in at the windows and watching the people coming out; but he did not see the Face, and, frantic lest he should lose it once more, he crowded into one of the cars at the last minute. He tried at first to pass through the train searching for the man with the "good face," but the guards rebuffed him, and the usually good-natured crowd was provoked to impatience by his squirming efforts; and he himself soon became so exhausted in his attempt that he gave it up. At Grand Central Station he again hurried out upon the platform to watch the crowds getting off. The gong had begun to ring again when he caught sight of a tall figure mounting a short flight of stairs toward the upper platform, and he immediately knew that there was the man he sought. The Face was turned away, yet he thought he could not be mistaken. He rushed toward the stairway, bumping into others so many times in his haste that he really made little speed. When he reached the top of the stairs he looked about. For one heart-sick moment he thought he had lost the man after all. Then, away across the station, near one of the exits, he saw the tall figure again. The man was leaving the station, and as he passed out, for a moment he turned his face toward the crowd within; and Mr. Neal knew then that he had not been mistaken.

To the little clerk it seemed an age before he could reach the exit through which the tall figure had passed. He ran around people and dodged and ducked, oblivious of the curious watching of the crowd. At last he gained the exit. The tall man was nowhere to be seen.

Mr. Neal found himself on Forty-second Street, east of Fourth Avenue. It was night, and the December wind pierced his clothing and cut to his very bones like a knife. He buttoned his sack coat up tightly and turned up the collar. He decided to walk east down Forty-second Street, in the hope of seeing the Face again. He walked very rapidly, impelled both by the desire to keep as warm as possible, and the thought that whatever chance he had of finding the man would be lost if he did not hurry.

As he stood for a moment on the curb before crossing Lexington Avenue, halted by a long string of passing automobiles, he thought he saw the tall man at about the middle of the next block. Taking his life in his hands, he scurried across the street, dodging in and out among the vehicles with the curses of the drivers in his ears. But he got across safely, and now he was certain that he had been right: there was the tall figure he could not mistake. Now he gained on the man, who turned south into Third Avenue. As Mr. Neal breathlessly turned the corner he saw the tall man mounting the stoop of a shabby four-story apartment house a little way down the street. About to enter he turned his face toward the running clerk and even by the dim light at the entrance to the dingy house, Mr. Neal could see how ineffably spiritual and strong the Face was. Joy filled the little clerk's heart so full that tears came to his eyes. At last he was to meet the man with the "good face"—after so long! He managed to find breath to call out.

"I say!" he shouted.

But he was too late for the door had closed almost before the words left his mouth.

Leaping up the steps, he found that the door was not locked, and he entered a dark hall-way. He heard a step on the landing above, and called out again, but there was no answer. He hurried up the creaking stairs, but he was just in time to see the first door on his left closed silently but firmly.

Mr. Neal hesitated. He took off his hat and wiped his fore-

head, which was damp with perspiration. Then he rang the bell.

The hall-way was dimly lighted with one small gas-jet over against the discolored wall. Mr. Neal waited. Presently he heard footsteps. Then the door was opened and a flood of warm light poured into the dim little hall. A short, white-bearded old man stood in the doorway. He seemed the very personification of serene happiness, and over his shoulder peered an old lady whose face was lighted by the same kindly joy. There was an atmosphere of quiet goodness about them both; it flooded out into the hall-way as sensibly as the glow of light itself. The old couple looked questioningly at Mr. Neal. The little clerk was somewhat embarrassed.

"I—I wanted to see the gentleman who just came in here," he said.

The white-bearded old man seemed surprised.

"Why, nobody has come in here," he said in a gentle voice. "Not since I came home over an hour ago."

"Oh, the tall man, with—with—"

"But nobody has come in, Sir," reiterated the old man.

"Just now, you know," insisted Mr. Neal. "A tall man—"

A shadow crossed the old man's face—a shade of alarm. The woman withdrew a little. Some of the happiness seemed to leave their faces, allowing the wrinkles of age to show themselves.

"I don't know what you mean, Sir," the old man said slowly, "but we two are alone here. There is no tall man here, I assure you. Please—"

"But you haven't a lodger?" asked Mr. Neal hopefully. "This is a very tall man; that is the reason I could see him so well in the Subway. He has a good face—a really wonderful face—"

Mr. Neal hesitated a moment, realizing that he had been led to reveal his secret to one who might not understand.

Pity came into the old gentleman's eyes.

"Ah," he said, and nodded. "If I could be of any help to you— Would you come in?"

"Didn't he come in here, really? Hasn't a tall man been here?"

"Nobody is here, Sir, but us. But if I could do anything for you, I'd be glad to."

Mr. Neal saw that the old gentleman thought he was dealing with a demented man; he saw too that the denial was an honest one.

"Thank you," said Mr. Neal. "No. I must be going. I am very sorry I troubled you."

The old man bade him a cheery good-night, but he looked after Mr. Neal in solicitude as the clerk went slowly down the steps.

The air was bitter cold outside, and Mr. Neal realized for the first time that he did not have his overcoat. He shivered.

Hunching his shoulders up against the blast, he hurried back to the Subway.

Heart-breaking though his disappointment was, Mr. Neal was not embittered. There was one thing that he knew now beyond all cavil or doubt: he knew that he should find the man with the good face. He knew that he should eventually meet him somewhere, sometime, and come to know him. How Mr. Neal longed for that time words cannot describe, but his settled faith that his desire would one day be fulfilled kept him tranquil and happy. Why should he be impatient? Perhaps today, or tomorrow, perhaps in this car he was entering, perhaps just around the next corner—he would see the Face.

"It will be soon," he would say to himself. "I know it will be soon."

The beggars in front of the Imperial Building came to know the little clerk and thank him in advance for his alms. The elevator men and the newsies came to watch for him. Mr. Neal himself took an interest in everybody. He formed the habit of watching crowds wherever they were the greatest, partly because thereby his chance of discovering the Face was enhanced, and partly because crowds thrilled him. What a tremendous mass of emotions—hopes, fears, ambitions, joys, sorrows—were in these thousand faces swirling about him in ceaseless tide! They were all individuals; that was the wonder

of it! All were individuals with personalities of their own, with their own lives to live and their own problems to think out. He would like to help them all.

Mr. Neal at last formed the acquaintance of the members of the family with whom he had lodged so long. One evening just outside his room he met a red-checked boy whom he supposed to be the son of his landlord, and it came to him with a shock that he scarcely knew these people under whose roof he had lived for many years. The boy seemed surprised and a little frightened when Mr. Neal tried to talk to him, and the clerk resolved there and then to make amends for past neglect. The very next evening he made an excuse to visit the father of the household. A fine hearty fellow he found him, sitting in the kitchen with his stockinged feet up on a chair, smoking an old clay pipe and reading the evening paper. Mr. Neal learned that he was a hard-working teamster. The man seemed pleased with his lodger's attentions, and invited him to come again, and Mr. Neal did come again and often, for he liked his landlord from the start. There were three children, two of them pictures of health, but the third thin and pale and unable to romp about because of a twisted leg.

Mr. Neal became a veritable member of the household, and when he discovered from a chance remark of the father that they were saving money penny by penny to buy a brace for the crooked leg, he insisted on "loaning" the money to make up the balance still lacking.

"Funny thing," commented the teamster one evening. "We used to think you wasn't human exactly." He laughed heartily. "Gotta get acquainted with a guy, ain't you?"

Then his wife, a thin, washed-out little woman, embarrassed the little clerk greatly by saying gravely,

"Mr. Neal, you're a good man."

Her eyes were on the little cripple.

In the same vein was the comment of the office force at Fields, Jones & Houseman's on the occasion of Arnold's injury in the elevator accident, when Mr. Neal took up a collection for the injured man, heading the subscription himself.

"Funny thing," exclaimed the chief clerk to a stenog-

rapher as they were leaving the office that afternoon. "Funny thing: when I first came here James Neal was close as a clam; never a word out of him. Paid no attention to anybody; all gloom. Now look at him helping everybody! Best old scout in the office!"

As he nodded his head in emphasis, his eye-glasses trembled on his nose—but they stuck.

"I've not got a better friend in the whole town than James Neal, and I know it," he added, "and I guess that's true of everybody in the office!"

It was true that Mr. Neal and the chief clerk had become fast friends. They had come to spend their Sundays together, and even to share confidences, and so it was natural that when Mr. Neal saw the Face for the third time he should be moved to tell his friend about it. This telling of his secret was epochal in Mr. Neal's life.

The two men sat on a bench in a more or less secluded part of Bronx Park. Mr. Neal looked off among the trees as he told the story of the Face hesitatingly, often in difficulty for the right word, the light of the mystic glowing in his eyes. The chief clerk listened attentively, his cane across his knees, his lean face serious. His eyes bored into the very mind of his friend with their keen gaze. When Mr. Neal told of his failure to find the man with the good face in the house on Third Avenue, his friend shook his head definitely.

"No!" he said. "No! I'll tell you what it is: it is what they call a hallucination."

"Oh, no," replied Mr. Neal calmly. "It is real, John. There's no doubt it's real."

The chief clerk shook his head sharply again, and there was a pause.

"I felt I must tell you," resumed Mr. Neal at length, "because I saw him again last night."

His friend looked quickly at the little clerk, who gazed away among the trees, his eyes luminous.

"I saw him in the Pennsylvania Subway Station, and I followed him out. There was no doubt about it: I saw his face. He went down Eighth Avenue, and I saw him turn in at a

door. I wasn't far behind him. The door was right next to a pawn-shop. It was unlatched, and I went in. I found myself in a dark hall-way, but toward the other end there was light coming from a half-opened door. I was excited, John. Tremendously. You see, John, it was the great experience of my life—no wonder I was trembling.

"I stepped quietly back to where the light was, and looked into the room that it came from. What do you think I saw, John? There was a young mother and two fresh-cheeked boys; one of the boys was reading at the table, and the other one sat in a low chair at his mother's knee and she was talking to him—telling him stories, I think. The room was poor, John, but the mother's face! It was wonderful! It reminded me of my own mother's. There is just one word to describe it, John: it was a Madonna's face—a Madonna of Eighth Avenue!"

Mr. Neal paused and glanced at his friend. The chief clerk said nothing, but dug at the turf with his stick.

"But the tall man was not there," resumed Mr. Neal. "I knocked at the door and asked about him. The woman didn't know; no man was in their rooms, she said. She was a poor widow. She wanted to know how I got in. I could see I was frightening her, so I left, and I could hear the door locked behind me."

The little clerk sighed, and passed his hand over his eyes.

His friend rose suddenly.

"Come," he said. "Let's walk—and talk about something else."

This was but the first of many talks the two clerks had about the Face. Mr. Neal's friend became more and more sympathetic toward the quest. One afternoon Mr. Neal detained the chief clerk as he was leaving the office after work. The little clerk's eyes were very serious, and his voice was low as he said,

"John, I know that I am going to find him very soon. I know it."

"How do you know it?" asked the chief clerk. "Something —well—psychic?"

"Oh, no. It's not mysterious. It's just a—a certainty, John. I know I shall find him very, very soon."

"Well, you know—" and the chief clerk looked at Mr. Neal steadily, "you know that I—I should like to know him, too."

Mr. Neal wrung his friend's hand. They went down together in the elevator and parted. Mr. Neal hurried down into his Subway station. There were not many waiting on the platforms. Far down the black tunnels in either direction the little white lights glimmered. The echoing silence of a great cave was in the station. Then suddenly the red and green lights of a train appeared far away; then a rumble and a roar, the doors of the train slid open and Mr. Neal stepped in. All the way home he kept his eyes shut. The hurtling roar, the crush of people growing greater as they approached the great business sections, the calls of the guards, did not disturb Mr. Neal. He kept his eyes closed so he might see the Face.

It was about one o'clock of the next day that the accident occurred of which James Neal was the victim. He had been trying to cross the street in defiance of traffic regulations, and had been struck by a heavily loaded truck and knocked down, with some injury to his skull. He had been taken, unconscious, to St. Cecilia's Hospital.

Little work was done by the clerks of Fields, Jones & Houseman that afternoon. One of the clerks had seen the accident; indeed he had been talking to Mr. Neal just before the latter had rushed into the street. He had seen the little clerk suddenly raise his hand and point across the street.

"I see it! There he is!" Mr. Neal had said in a voice exultant with joy, and then he had dodged into the traffic, reckless of life and limb.

The chief clerk was greatly distressed. He could not work. He would sit with his lank form huddled up in his office chair, gazing fixedly over his eye-glasses at nothing in particular. About two o'clock he bethought himself to look up in the telephone directory the family with which Mr. Neal lodged, and to inform them of the accident. The whole office

force listened to the conversation over the telephone, and heard the chief's voice break as he told of the seriousness of the injury. Then the chief clerk shut his books sharply, put on his street coat and rusty straw hat, and set out for the hospital.

Long before the chief clerk arrived at the ward in which Mr. James Neal lay, a white-coated doctor, standing momentarily in a doorway of the hospital, met a nurse coming out. The doctor's face was such a one as would have delighted Mr. Neal if he had been able to see it. It was a benevolent face. A profound knowledge of the problems of humanity had marked it with depth of understanding, and withal, a kindliness and sympathy, that made it worthy a second and a third glance in any company, however distinguished.

"How about the skull fracture?" asked the doctor in a low voice, as the nurse was passing out.

"He is dead," said the nurse.

"When?" asked the doctor.

"Just now. I just left him."

"There was no chance," said the doctor.

The nurse was about to pass on when the doctor detained her.

"That tall man," he said, "who was with him: where has he gone?"

The nurse looked at the doctor in surprise.

"There was no one with him but me," she said.

"Oh, yes," said the doctor. "I saw a man bending over the bed—a very tall man with a remarkable face. I wondered who he could be."

The nurse turned, and with the doctor looked over toward the bed where the body of James Neal lay.

"That is strange," said the nurse.

"I saw him there," said the doctor, "just as you were leaving the patient; now he is gone."

"Queer! I saw no one," said the nurse, and moved away to attend to other duties.

The doctor walked over to the bed where the body of the little clerk lay.

"It *is* strange," he mused. "I surely saw him. . . . The most beautiful face I ever saw."

Then he looked down at what had been James Neal.

"He is very fortunate," said the doctor in a low tone, "to die with a face like that looking into his."

There was a smile on the death-white lips of the little clerk.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Why does the first paragraph make instant appeal to the reader?
2. What character indications appear in the first paragraph?
3. What events first strongly arouse the reader's interest?
4. In what respects is James Neal a symbolic figure?
5. How does the story satirize modern civilization?
6. Show that the entire story is based upon observation of life.
7. For what type of person does James Neal look?
8. Which sentences make appeal because they are especially stimulating in thought, or unusually beautiful in expression?
9. What enables James Neal, on several occasions, to see the man for whom he is looking?
10. Why does the author refer to familiar places in New York City?
11. How does James Neal's search affect his character? How does it affect others with whom he associates?
12. What types of people does the Man with the Good Face visit?
13. Why does the Man with the Good Face bend over James Neal's death-bed?
14. What lends power to the last two paragraphs of the story?
15. What is the theme of the story?
16. What is the author's purpose?
17. How does the story affect the reader?
18. Read Henry Van Dyke's "The Other Wise Man." In what respects are the two stories alike? In what respects are they unlike?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"The Man with the Good Face" is an allegorical story set in commonplace surroundings in New York City, and strongly based upon ordinary events in the tidal life of the metropolis. The story indicates that even in the hurried struggle for existence a person may follow an ideal; may look for goodness rather than evil; may rejoice in quiet happiness and in pure love; and may find time to give sympathy, and to do acts of kindness. Such a person, like James Neal in the story, will look upon

the Face he seeks, that is, he will approach the ideal. In "The Man with the Good Face," realistic descriptions of places and of crowds, suggestive delineations of typical people, and the various events of the simple plot emphasize the theme by setting it into relief against a background of reality.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, select a theme worthy of emphasis; invent a character who will represent an average human being; and plan a series of simple events that will make the reader realize the theme. Suggest the theme, but do not state it: mere statement is weak: suggestion is all-powerful.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. An invalid looks for some one who is perfectly happy.
2. A young man sets out to accumulate a real fortune.
3. A hero-worshiper tries to find people who are really great.
4. A newspaper reporter is assigned to discover the most useful citizen.
5. A teacher tries to prophesy which of his pupils will gain most success in life.

WHAT WAS IT?*

By Fitz-James O'Brien

Fitz-James O'Brien (1828–1862) was born in Limerick, Ireland, and educated in the University of Dublin. In 1851 he came to New York City, and at once entered into the literary life of the day, making warm friendships with many prominent writers. He wrote for *Harper's Weekly* and *Harper's Magazine*, and also for the stage. As a staff officer in the Civil War he acted with great bravery, was severely wounded, and died in 1862. Two of his short stories, *What Was It?* and *The Diamond Lens*, won permanent fame.

IT is, I confess, with considerable diffidence that I approach the strange narrative which I am about to relate. The events which I purpose detailing are of so extraordinary and unheard-of a character that I am quite prepared to meet with an unusual amount of incredulity and scorn. I accept all such beforehand. I have, I trust, the literary courage to face unbelief. I have, after mature consideration, resolved to narrate, in as simple and straightforward a manner as I can compass, some facts that passed under my observation in the month of July last, and which, in the annals of the mysteries of physical science, are wholly unparalleled.

I live at No.— Twenty-sixth Street, in this city. The house is in some respects a curious one. It has enjoyed for the last two years the reputation of being haunted. It is a large and stately residence, surrounded by what was once a garden, but which is now only a green inclosure used for bleaching clothes. The dry basin of what has been a fountain, and a few fruit-trees, ragged and unpruned, indicate that this spot, in past days, was a pleasant, shady retreat, filled with fruits and flowers and the sweet murmur of waters.

* From *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. Reprinted by special permission of Harper & Brothers.

The house is very spacious. A hall of noble size leads to a vast spiral staircase winding through its centre; while the various apartments are of imposing dimensions. It was built some fifteen or twenty years since by Mr. A——, the well-known New York merchant, who five years ago threw the commercial world into convulsions by a stupendous bank fraud. Mr. A——, as every one knows, escaped to Europe, and died not long after of a broken heart. Almost immediately after the news of his decease reached this country, and was verified, the report spread in Twenty-sixth Street that No.— was haunted. Legal measures had dispossessed the widow of its former owner, and it was inhabited merely by a care-taker and his wife, placed there by the house-agent into whose hands it had passed for purposes of renting or sale. These people declared that they were troubled with unnatural noises. Doors were opened without any visible agency. The remnants of furniture scattered through the various rooms were, during the night, piled one upon the other by unknown hands. Invisible feet passed up and down the stairs in broad daylight, accompanied by the rustle of unseen silk dresses and the gliding of viewless hands along the massive balusters. The care-taker and his wife declared they would live there no longer. The house-agent laughed, dismissed them, and put others in their places. The noises and supernatural manifestations continued. The neighborhood caught up the story, and the house remained untenanted for three years. Several parties negotiated for it; but somehow, always before the bargain was closed, they heard the unpleasant rumors, and declined to treat any further.

It was in this state of things that my landlady—who at that time kept a boarding-house in Bleecker Street, and who wished to move farther up town—conceived the bold idea of renting No.— Twenty-sixth Street. Happening to have in her house rather a plucky and philosophical set of boarders, she laid her scheme before us, stating candidly every thing she had heard respecting the ghostly qualities of the establishment to which she wished to remove us. With the exception of one or two timid persons—a sea-captain and a re-

turned Californian, who immediately gave notice that they would leave—every one of Mrs. Moffat's guests declared that they would accompany her in her chivalric incursion into the abode of spirits.

Our removal was effected in the month of May, and we were all charmed with our new residence. The portion of Twenty-sixth Street where our house is situated—between Seventh and Eighth Avenues—is one of the pleasantest localities in New York. The gardens back of the houses, running down nearly to the Hudson, form, in the summer time, a perfect avenue of verdure. The air is pure and invigorating, sweeping, as it does, straight across the river from the Weehawken heights, and even the ragged garden which surrounded the house on two sides, although displaying on washing-days rather too much clothes-line, still gave us a piece of green sward to look at, and a cool retreat in the summer evenings, where we smoked our cigars in the dusk, and watched the fire-flies flashing their dark-lanterns in the long grass.

Of course we had no sooner established ourselves at No.— than we began to expect the ghosts. We absolutely awaited their advent with eagerness. Our dinner conversation was supernatural. One of the boarders, who had purchased Mrs. Crowe's "Night Side of Nature" for his own private delectation, was regarded as a public enemy by the entire household for not having bought twenty copies. The man led a life of supreme wretchedness while he was perusing the volume. A system of espionage was established, of which he was the victim. If he incautiously laid the book down for an instant and left the room, it was immediately seized and read aloud in secret places to a select few. I found myself a person of immense importance, it having leaked out that I was tolerably well versed in the history of supernaturalism, and had once written a story, entitled "The Pot of Tulips," for *Harper's Monthly*, the foundation of which was a ghost. If a table or a wainscot panel happened to warp when we were assembled in the large drawing-room, there was an instant silence, and

every one was prepared for an immediate clinking of chains and a spectral form.

After a month of psychological excitement, it was with the utmost dissatisfaction that we were forced to acknowledge that nothing in the remotest degree approaching the supernatural had manifested itself. Once the black butler asseverated that his candle had been blown out by some invisible agency while in the act of undressing himself for the night; but as I had more than once discovered this colored gentleman in a condition when one candle must have appeared to him like two, I thought it possible that, by going a step farther in his potations, he might have reversed this phenomenon, and seen no candle at all where he ought to have beheld one.

Things were in this state when an incident took place so awful and inexplicable in its character that my reason fairly reels at the bare memory of the occurrence. It was the 10th of July. After dinner was over I repaired, with my friend Dr. Hammond, to the garden to smoke my evening pipe. Independent of certain mental sympathies which existed between the Doctor and myself, we were linked together by a secret vice. We both smoked opium. We knew each other's secret and respected it. We enjoyed together that wonderful expansion of thought; that marvelous intensifying of the perceptive faculties; that boundless feeling of existence when we seem to have points of contact with the whole universe; in short, that unimaginable spiritual bliss, which I would not surrender for a throne, and which I hope you, reader, will never—never taste.

Those hours of opium happiness which the Doctor and I spent together in secret were regulated with a scientific accuracy. We did not blindly smoke the drug of Paradise, and leave our dreams to chance. While smoking we carefully steered our conversations through the brightest and calmest channels of thought. We talked of the East, and endeavored to recall the magical panorama of its glowing scenery. We criticised the most sensuous poets, those who painted life ruddy with health, brimming with passion, happy in the pos-

session of youth, and strength, and beauty. If we talked of Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream," we lingered over Ariel and avoided Caliban. Like the Gebers, we turned our faces to the East, and saw only the sunny side of the world.

This skillful coloring of our train of thought produced in our subsequent visions a corresponding tone. The splendors of Arabian fairy-land dyed our dreams. We paced that narrow strip of grass with the tread and port of kings. The song of the *Rana arborea* while he clung to the bark of the ragged plum-tree sounded like the strains of divine orchestras. Houses, walls, and streets melted like rain-clouds, and vistas of unimaginable glory stretched away before us. It was a rapturous companionship. We each of us enjoyed the vast delight more perfectly because, even in our most ecstatic moments, we were ever conscious of each other's presence. Our pleasures, while individual, were still twin, vibrating and moving in musical accord.

On the evening in question, the 10th of July, the Doctor and myself found ourselves in an unusually metaphysical mood. We lit our large meerschaums, filled with fine Turkish tobacco, in the core of which burned a little black nut of opium, that, like the nut in the fairy tale, held within its narrow limits wonders beyond the reach of kings; we paced to and fro, conversing. A strange perversity dominated the currents of our thought. They would *not* flow through the sunlit channels in which we strove to divert them. For some unaccountable reason they constantly diverged into dark and lonesome beds, where a continued gloom brooded. It was in vain that, after our old fashion, we flung ourselves on the shores of the East, and talked of its gay bazaars, of the splendors of the time of Haroun, of harems and golden palaces. Black afreets continually arose from the depths of our talk, and expanded, like the one the fisherman released from the copper vessel, until they blotted every thing bright from our vision. Insensibly we yielded to the occult force that swayed us, and indulged in gloomy speculation. We had talked some time upon the proneness of the human mind to mysticism and

the almost universal love of the Terrible, when Hammond suddenly said to me:

"What do you consider to be the greatest element of Terror?"

The question, I own, puzzled me. That many things were terrible, I knew. Stumbling over a corpse in the dark; beholding, as I once did, a woman floating down a deep and rapid river, with wildly-lifted arms and awful, upturned face, uttering, as she sank, shrieks that rent one's heart, while we, the spectators, stood frozen at a window which overhung the river at a height of sixty feet, unable to make the slightest effort to save her, but dumbly watching her last supreme agony and her disappearance. A shattered wreck, with no life visible, encountered floating listlessly on the ocean, is a terrible object, for it suggests a huge terror, the proportions of which are veiled. But it now struck me for the first time that there must be one great and ruling embodiment of fear, a King of Terrors to which all others must succumb. What might it be? To what train of circumstances would it owe its existence?

"I confess, Hammond," I replied to my friend, "I never considered the subject before. That there must be one Something more terrible than any other thing, I feel. I can not attempt, however, even the most vague definition."

"I am somewhat like you, Harry," he answered. "I feel my capacity to experience a terror greater than any thing yet conceived by the human mind. Something combining in fearful and unnatural amalgamation hitherto supposed incompatible elements. The calling of the voices in Brockden Brown's novel of 'Wieland' is awful; so is the picture of the Dweller of the Threshold in Bulwer's 'Zanoni'; but," he added, shaking his head gloomily, "there is something more horrible still than these."

"Look here, Hammond," I rejoined; "let us drop this kind of talk for Heaven's sake. We shall suffer for it, depend on it."

"I don't know what's the matter with me tonight," he replied, "but my brain is running upon all sorts of weird

and awful thoughts. I feel as if I could write a story like Hoffman tonight, if I were only master of a literary style."

"Well, if we are going to be Hoffmanesque in our talk I'm off to bed. Opium and nightmares should never be brought together. How sultry it is! Good-night, Hammond."

"Good-night, Harry. Pleasant dreams to you."

"To you, gloomy wretch, afreets, ghouls, and enchanters."

We parted, and each sought his respective chamber. I undressed quickly and got into bed, taking with me, according to my usual custom, a book, over which I generally read myself to sleep. I opened the volume as soon as I had laid my head upon the pillow, and instantly flung it to the other side of the room. It was Goudon's "History of Monsters"—a curious French work, which I had lately imported from Paris, but which, in the state of mind I was then in, was any thing but an agreeable companion. I resolved to go to sleep at once; so turning down my gas until nothing but a little blue point of light glimmered on the top of the tube, I composed myself to rest once more.

The room was in total darkness. The atom of gas that still remained lighted did not illuminate a distance of three inches round the burner. I desperately drew my arm across my eyes, as if to shut out even the darkness, and tried to think of nothing. It was in vain. The confounded themes touched on by Hammond in the garden kept obtruding themselves on my brain. I battled against them. I erected ramparts of would-be blankness of intellect to keep them out. They still crowded upon me. While I was lying still as a corpse, hoping that by a perfect physical inaction I would hasten mental repose, an awful incident occurred. A Something dropped, as it seemed, from the ceiling, plumb upon my chest, and the next instant I felt two bony hands encircling my throat, endeavoring to choke me.

I am no coward, and am possessed of considerable physical strength. The suddenness of the attack instead of stunning me strung every nerve to its highest tension. My body acted from instinct, before my brain had time to realize the terrors of my position. In an instant I wound two muscular arms

around the creature, and squeezed it, with all the strength of despair, against my chest. In a few seconds the bony hands that had fastened on my throat loosened their hold, and I was free to breathe once more. Then commenced a struggle of awful intensity. Immersed in the most profound darkness, totally ignorant of the nature of the Thing by which I was so suddenly attacked, finding my grasp slipping every moment by reason, it seemed to me, of the entire nakedness of my assailant, bitten with sharp teeth in the shoulder, neck, and chest, having every moment to protect my throat against a pair of sinewy, agile hands, which my utmost efforts could not confine—these were a combination of circumstances to combat which required all the strength and skill and courage that I possessed.

At last, after a silent, deadly, exhausting struggle, I got my assailant under by a series of incredible efforts of strength. Once pinned, with my knee on what I made out to be its chest, I knew that I was victor. I rested for a moment to breathe. I heard the creature beneath me panting in the darkness, and felt the violent throbbing of a heart. It was apparently as exhausted as I was, that was one comfort. At this moment I remembered that I usually placed under my pillow, before going to bed, a large, yellow silk pocket-handkerchief, for use during the night. I felt for it instantly; it was there. In a few seconds more I had, after a fashion, pinioned the creature's arms.

I now felt tolerably secure. There was nothing more to be done but to turn on the gas, and, having first seen what my midnight assailant was like, arouse the household. I will confess to being actuated by a certain pride in not giving the alarm before; I wished to make the capture alone and unaided.

Never loosing my hold for an instant, I slipped from the bed to the floor, dragging my captive with me. I had but a few steps to make to reach the gas-burner; these I made with the greatest caution, holding the creature in a grip like a vice. At last I got within arm's-length of the tiny speck of blue light, which told me where the gas-burner lay. Quick as lightning I released my grasp with one hand and let

on the full flood of light. Then I turned to look at my captive.

I can not even attempt to give any definition of my sensations the instant after I turned on the gas. I suppose I must have shrieked with terror, for in less than a minute afterward my room was crowded with the inmates of the house. I shudder now as I think of that awful moment. *I saw nothing!* Yes; I had one arm firmly clasped round a breathing, panting, corporeal shape, my other hand gripped with all its strength a throat as warm, and apparently fleshly, as my own; and yet, with this living substance in my grasp, with its body pressed against my own, and all in the bright glare of a large jet of gas, I absolutely beheld nothing! Not even an outline—a vapor!

I do not, even at this hour, realize the situation in which I found myself. I can not recall the astounding incident thoroughly. Imagination in vain tries to compass the awful paradox.

It breathed. I felt its warm breath upon my cheek. It struggled fiercely. It had hands. They clutched me. Its skin was smooth, just like my own. There it lay, pressed close up against me, solid as stone—and yet utterly invisible!

I wonder that I did not faint or go mad on the instant. Some wonderful instinct must have sustained me; for, absolutely, in place of loosening my hold on the terrible Enigma, I seemed to gain an additional strength in my moment of horror, and tightened my grasp with such wonderful force that I felt the creature shivering with agony.

Just then Hammond entered my room at the head of the household. As soon as he beheld my face—which, I suppose, must have been an awful sight to look at—he hastened forward, crying,

"Great Heaven, Harry! what has happened?"

"Hammond! Hammond!" I cried, "come here. Oh! this is awful! I have been attacked in bed by something or other, which I have hold of; but I can't see it—I can't see it!"

Hammond, doubtless struck by the unfeigned horror expressed in my countenance, made one or two steps forward

with an anxious yet puzzled expression. A very audible titter burst from the remainder of my visitors. This supressed laughter made me furious. To laugh at a human being in my position! It was the worst species of cruelty. *Now,* I can understand why the appearance of a man struggling violently, as it would seem, with an airy nothing, and calling for assistance against a vision, should have appeared ludicrous. *Then,* so great was my rage against the mocking crowd that had I the power I would have stricken them dead where they stood.

"Hammond! Hammond!" I cried again, despairingly, "for God's sake come to me. I can hold the—the Thing but a short while longer. It is overpowering me. Help me! Help me!"

"Harry," whispered Hammond, approaching me, "you have been smoking too much opium."

"I swear to you Hammond that this is no vision," I answered, in the same low tone. "Don't you see how it shakes my whole frame with its struggles? If you don't believe me convince yourself. Feel it—touch it."

Hammond advanced and laid his hand in the spot I indicated. A wild cry of horror burst from him. He had felt it!

In a moment he had discovered somewhere in my room a long piece of cord, and was the next instant winding it, and knotting it about the body of the unseen being that I clasped in my arms.

"Harry," he said, in a hoarse, agitated voice, for, though he preserved his presence of mind, he was deeply moved, "Harry, it's all safe now. You may let go, old fellow, if you're tired. The Thing can't move."

I was utterly exhausted, and I gladly loosed my hold.

Hammond stood holding the ends of the cord that bound the Invisible, twisted round his hand, while before him, self-supporting, as it were, he beheld a rope laced and interlaced, and stretching tightly around a vacant space. I never saw a man look so thoroughly stricken with awe. Nevertheless, his face expressed all the courage and determination which I

knew him to possess. His lips, although white, were set firmly, and one could perceive at a glance that, although stricken with fear, he was not daunted.

The confusion that ensued among the guests of the house, who were witnesses of this extraordinary scene between Hammond and myself—who beheld the pantomime of binding this struggling Something—who beheld me almost sinking from physical exhaustion when my task of jailer was over—the confusion and terror that took possession of the by-standers, when they saw all this, was beyond description. Many of the weaker ones fled from the apartment. The few who remained behind clustered near the door, and could not be induced to approach Hammond and his Charge. Still incredulity broke out through their terror. They had not the courage to satisfy themselves, and yet they doubted. It was in vain that I begged of some of the men to come near and convince themselves by touch of the existence of a living being in that room which was invisible. They were incredulous, but did not dare to undeceive themselves. How could a solid, living, breathing body be invisible? they asked. My reply was this. I gave a sign to Hammond, and both of us—conquering our fearful repugnance to touching the invisible creature—lifted it from the ground, manacled as it was, and took it to my bed. Its weight was about that of a boy of fourteen.

"Now my friends," I said, as Hammond and myself held the creature suspended over the bed, "I can give you self-evident proof that here is a solid, ponderable body which, nevertheless, you can not see. Be good enough to watch the surface of the bed attentively."

I was astonished at my own courage in treating this strange event so calmly; but I had recovered from my first terror, and felt a sort of scientific pride in the affair which dominated every other feeling.

The eyes of the by-standers were immediately fixed on my bed. At a given signal Hammond and I let the creature fall. There was the dull sound of a heavy body alighting on a soft mass. The timbers of the bed creaked. A deep impression

marked itself distinctly on the pillow, and on the bed itself. The crowd who witnessed this gave a sort of low, universal cry, and rushed from the room. Hammond and I were left alone with our Mystery.

We remained silent for some time, listening to the low, irregular breathing of the creature on the bed, and watching the rustle of the bed-clothes as it impotently struggled to free itself from confinement. Then Hammond spoke.

"Harry this is awful."

"Ay, awful."

"But not unaccountable."

"Not unaccountable! What do you mean? Such a thing has never occurred since the birth of the world. I know not what to think, Hammond. God grant that I am not mad, and that this not an insane fantasy!"

"Let us reason a little, Harry. Here is a solid body which we touch, but which we can not see. The fact is so unusual that it strikes us with terror. Is there no parallel, though, for such a phenomenon? Take a piece of pure glass. It is tangible and transparent. A certain chemical coarseness is all that prevents its being so entirely transparent as to be totally invisible. It is not *theoretically impossible,* mind you, to fabricate a glass which shall not reflect a single ray of light —a glass so pure and homogeneous in its atoms that the rays from the sun shall pass through it as they do through the air, refracted but not reflected. We do not see the air, and yet we feel it."

"That's all very well, Hammond, but these are inanimate substances. Glass does not breathe, air does not breathe. *This* thing has a heart that palpitates. A will that moves it. Lungs that play and inspire and respire."

"You forget the strange phenomena of which we have so often heard of late," answered the Doctor, gravely. "At the meetings called 'spirit circles,' invisible hands have been thrust into the hands of those persons round the table—warm, fleshly hands that seemed to pulsate with mortal life."

"What? Do you think, then, that this thing is—"

"I don't know what it is," was the solemn reply; "but

please the gods I will, with your assistance, thoroughly investigate it.''

We watched together, smoking many pipes, all night long by the bedside of the unearthly being that tossed and panted until it was apparently wearied out. Then we learned by the low, regular breathing that it slept.

The next morning the house was all astir. The boarders congregated on the landing outside my room, and Hammond and myself were lions. We had to answer a thousand questions as to the state of our extraordinary prisoner, for as yet not one person in the house except ourselves could be induced to set foot in the apartment.

The creature was awake. This was evidenced by the convulsive manner in which the bed-clothes were moved in its efforts to escape. There was something truly terrible in beholding, as it were, those second-hand indications of the terrible writhings and agonized struggles for liberty, which themselves were invisible.

Hammond and myself had racked our brains during the long night to discover some means by which we might realize the shape and general appearance of the Enigma. As well as we could make out by passing our hands over the creature's form, its outlines and lineaments were human. There was a mouth; a round, smooth head without hair; a nose, which, however, was little elevated above the cheeks; and its hands and feet felt like those of a boy. At first we thought of placing the being on a smooth surface and tracing its outline with chalk, as shoemakers trace the outline of the foot. This plan was given up as being of no value. Such an outline would give not the slightest idea of its conformation.

A happy thought struck me. We would take a cast of it in plaster of Paris. This would give us the solid figure, and satisfy all our wishes. But how to do it? The movements of the creature would disturb the setting of the plastic covering, and distort the mould. Another thought. Why not give it chloroform? It had respiratory organs—that was evident by its breathing. Once reduced to a state of insensibility, we could do with it what we would. Doctor X—— was sent for;

and after the worthy physician had recovered from the first shock of amazement, he proceeded to administer the chloroform. In three minutes afterward we were enabled to remove the fetters from the creature's body, and a well-known modeler of this city was busily engaged in covering the invisible form with the moist clay. In five minutes more we had a mould, and before evening a rough *fac-simile* of the Mystery. It was shaped like a man. Distorted, uncouth, and horrible, but still a man. It was small, not over four feet and some inches in height, and its limbs betrayed a muscular development that was unparalleled. Its face surpassed in hideousness any thing I had ever seen. Gustave Dorè, or Callot, or Tony Johannot never conceived any thing so horrible. There is a face in one of the latter's illustrations to "*Un voyage ou il vous plaira,*" which somewhat approaches the countenance of this creature, but does not equal it. It was the physiognomy of what I should have fancied a ghoul to be. It looked as if it were capable of feeding on human flesh.

Having satisfied our curiosity, and bound every one in the house over to secrecy, it became a question what was to be done with our Enigma? It was impossible that we should keep such a horror in our house; it was equally impossible that such an awful being should be let loose upon the world. I confess that I would have gladly voted for the creature's destruction. But who would shoulder the responsibility? Who would undertake the execution of this horrible semblance of a human being? Day after day this question was deliberated gravely. The boarders all left the house. Mrs. Moffat was in despair, and threatened Hammond and myself with all sorts of legal penalties if we did not remove the Horror. Our answer was, "We will go if you like, but we decline taking this creature with us. Remove it yourself, if you please. It appeared in your house. On you the responsibility rests." To this there was, of course, no answer. Mrs. Moffat could not obtain for love or money a person who would even approach the Mystery.

The most singular part of the transaction was, that we were entirely ignorant of what the creature habitually fed on.

Every thing in the way of nutriment that we could think of was placed before it, but was never touched. It was awful to stand by, day after day, and see the clothes toss and hear the hard breathing, and know that it was starving.

Ten, twelve days, a fortnight passed, and it still lived. The pulsations of the heart, however, were daily growing fainter, and had now nearly ceased altogether. It was evident that the creature was dying for want of sustenance. While this terrible life-struggle was going on I felt miserable. I could not sleep of nights. Horrible as the creature was, it was pitiful to think of the pangs it was suffering.

At last it died. Hammond and I found it cold and stiff one morning in the bed. The heart had ceased to beat, the lungs to inspire. We hastened to bury it in the garden. It was a strange funeral, the dropping of that viewless corpse into the damp hole. The cast of its form I gave to Doctor X——, who keeps it in his museum in Tenth Street.

As I am on the eve of a long journey from which I may not return, I have drawn up this narrative of an event the most singular that has ever come to my knowledge.

HARRY ESCOTT.

[NOTE.—It is rumored that the proprietors of a well-known museum in this city have made arrangements with Dr. X—— to exhibit to the public the singular cast which Mr. Escott deposited with him. So extraordinary a history can not fail to attract universal attention.]

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What is the purpose of the first paragraph?
2. Describe the haunted house in Twenty-sixth Street.
3. Why did Mrs. Moffat rent the haunted house?
4. Why does the author delay so long in introducing the principal supernatural events?
5. Why does the author present two of his characters as opium-takers?
6. What does the conversation between the two opium-takers do for the story?
7. Why does the author make so many literary allusions?
8. Make a list of books and of authors that the story mentions. Consult an encyclopedia for further information concerning them.

9. In what different ways may the reader explain the Something that attacked the narrator?
10. How does the author use the facts of science to make the story realistic in effect?
11. How does the author give the story dramatic values?
12. Summarize all the means that are employed to make the story have the semblance of truth.

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"What Was It?" is a story in which the supernatural is presented from the point of view of the real. In order to give the story the appearance of truth, the author places it in the prosaic setting of a definitely located New York City boarding-house. He refers to recognized facts, such as the invisibility of air, and the transparency of glass. He mentions various physical effects, such as the appearance of the cords that bound the monster; the movements of the bed and of the bedding, and the making of a plaster cast. Last of all, he suggests the permanent exhibition of the cast in a well-known museum. In connection with all this, the author suggests the possibility that the narrator and his friend were deceived, and that the whole experience was merely the result of undue use of opium. The most marked characteristic of the story is its placing an experience with supernatural horror in an intensely realistic setting.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, invent an experience dealing with something beyond ordinary human understanding, and then support the strange event by presenting a mass of commonplace evidence that will appear to uphold the truth of the narrative. In order to prevent the story from becoming merely fantastic, suggest a natural explanation that the reader may choose, if he pleases, in preference to the supernatural.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. A person lives for a time in a haunted house, and appears to hold communication with unseen spirits.
2. A factory is haunted by the spectral figure of a girl who was killed while working there. Many night-watchmen abandon their position in that factory.
3. A person believes that he finds evil spirits living in the depths of an old well.
4. A student finds that an unseen hand, night after night, writes out all his class work, but in every exercise makes an absurd error.
5. A school-house is haunted by a band of spirits that appear to hold regular classes conducted by a spectral teacher.

THE OVAL PORTRAIT *

By Edgar Allan Poe

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849) was born in Boston, Massachusetts. When he was but two years old, both his father and his mother died, and he was adopted by John Allan, a rich Virginia merchant, who took him for a time to England, and then to his home in Richmond, Virginia. Poe attended the University of Virginia, served two years in the United States Army, and then, for one year, attended the West Point Military Academy. He became a writer for periodicals, a critic, and an editor, and he lived at various times in Richmond, New York City, and Philadelphia.

Edgar Allan Poe wrote with peculiar individuality and with great artistic power. In accordance with a literary mode of his day, as well as with his own somber personality, he chose subjects of gloom and terror. These he illuminated and softened by suggestive descriptions and poetic imagery. He wrote many hauntingly beautiful poems, among which are *The Raven*, *The Bells*, *Ulalume*, and *Annabel Lee*, and a great number of short stories, some of the best of which are "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Masque of the Red Death," "The Cask of Amontillado," "William Wilson," "The Purloined Letter," and "The Gold Bug."

By his brilliantly unusual tales, Poe powerfully illustrated the value of singleness of effect in short narration. He wrote with such success that he had immense influence on short-story writing. In a certain sense, Poe established the form of the modern short story.

THE chateau into which my valet had ventured to make forcible entrance, rather than permit me, in my desperately wounded condition, to pass a night in the open air, was one of those piles of commingled gloom and grandeur which have so long frowned among the Apennines, not less in fact than in the fancy of Mrs. Radcliffe. To all appearance

* First published in *Graham's Magazine*, May, 1842.

it had been temporarily and very lately abandoned. We established ourselves in one of the smallest and least sumptuously furnished apartments. It lay in a remote turret of the building. Its decorations were rich, yet tattered and antique. Its walls were hung with tapestry and bedecked with manifold and multiform armorial trophies, together with an unusually great number of very spirited modern paintings in frames of rich golden arabesque. In these paintings, which depended from the walls not only in their main surfaces, but in very many nooks which the bizarre architecture of the chateau rendered necessary—in these paintings my incipient delirium, perhaps, had caused me to take deep interest; so that I bade Pedro to close the heavy shutters of the room—since it was already night—to light the tongues of a tall candelabrum which stood by the head of the bed—and to throw open far and wide the fringed curtain of black velvet which enveloped the bed itself. I wished all this done that I might resign myself, if not to sleep, at least alternately to the contemplation of these pictures, and the perusal of a small volume which had been found upon the pillow, and which purported to criticise and describe them.

Long—long I read and devoutly, devotedly I gazed. Rapidly and gloriously the hours flew by, and the deep midnight came. The position of the candelabrum displeased me, and outreaching my hand with difficulty, rather than disturb my slumbering valet, I placed it so as to throw its rays more fully upon the book.

But the action produced an effect altogether unanticipated. The rays of the numerous candles (for there were many) now fell within a niche of the room which had hitherto been thrown into deep shade by one of the bed-posts. I thus saw in vivid light a picture all unnoticed before. It was the portrait of a young girl just ripening into womanhood. I glanced at the painting hurriedly, and then closed my eyes. Why I did this was not at first apparent even to my own perception. But while my lids remained thus shut, I ran over in mind my reasons for so shutting them. It was an impulsive movement to gain time for thought—to make sure that my vision had

not deceived me—to calm and subdue my fancy for a more sober and more certain gaze. In a very few moments I again looked fixedly at the painting.

That I now saw aright I could not and would not doubt; for the first flashing of the candles upon that canvas had seemed to dissipate the dreamy stupor which was stealing over my senses, and to startle me at once into waking life.

The portrait, I have already said, was that of a young girl. It was a mere head and shoulders, done in what is technically termed a *vignette* manner, much in the style of the favorite heads of Sully. The arms, the bosom, and even the ends of the radiant hair, melted imperceptibly into the vague yet deep shadow which formed the background of the whole. The frame was oval, richly gilded and filigreed in Moresque. As a thing of art nothing could be more admirable than the painting itself. But it could have been neither the execution of the work, nor the immortal beauty of the countenance, which had so suddenly and so vehemently moved me. Least of all, could it have been that my fancy, shaken from its half slumber, had mistaken the head for that of a living person. I saw at once that the peculiarities of the design, of the *vignetting,* and of the frame, must have instantly dispelled such idea—must have prevented even its momentary entertainment. Thinking earnestly upon these points, I remained, for an hour, perhaps, half sitting, half reclining, with my vision riveted upon the portrait. At length, satisfied with the true secret of its effect, I fell back within the bed. I had found the spell of the picture in an absolute life-likeness of expression, which, at first startling, finally confounded, subdued and appalled me. With deep and reverent awe I replaced the candelabrum in its former position. The cause of my deep agitation being thus shut from view, I sought eagerly the volume which discussed the paintings and their histories. Turning to the number which designated the oval portrait, I read there the vague and quaint words which follow:

"She was a maiden of rarest beauty, and not more lovely than full of glee. And evil was the hour when she saw, and loved, and wedded the

painter. He, passionate, studious, austere, and having already a bride in his Art: she a maiden of rarest beauty, and not more lovely than full of glee; all light and smiles, and frolicsome as the young fawn; loving and cherishing all things; hating only the Art which was her rival; and dreading only the palette and brushes and other untoward instruments which deprived her of the countenance of her lover. It was thus a terrible thing for this lady to hear the painter speak of his desire to portray even his young bride. But she was humble and obedient, and sat meekly for many weeks in the dark high turret-chamber where the light dripped upon the pale canvas only from overhead. But he, the painter, took glory in his work, which went on from hour to hour, and from day to day. And he was a passionate, and wild, and moody man, who became lost in reveries; so that he *would* not see that the light which fell so ghastly in that lone turret withered the health and the spirits of his bride, who pined visibly to all but him. Yet she smiled on and still on, uncomplainingly, because she saw that the painter (who had high renown) took a fervid and burning pleasure in his task, and wrought day and night to depict her who so loved him, yet who grew daily more spirited and weak. And in sooth some who beheld the portrait spoke of its resemblance in low words, as of a mighty marvel, and a proof not less of the power of the painter than of his deep love for her whom he depicted so surpassingly well. But at length, as the labor drew nearer to its conclusion, there were admitted none into the turret; for the painter had grown wild with the ardor of his work, and turned his eyes from the canvas rarely, even to regard the countenance of his wife. And he *would* not see that the tints which he spread upon the canvas were drawn from the cheeks of her who sat beside him. And when many weeks had passed, and but little remained to do, save one brush upon the mouth and one tint upon the eye, the spirit of the lady again flickered up as the flame within the socket of the lamp. And then the brush was given, and then the tint was placed; and for one moment the painter stood entranced before the work which he had wrought; but in the next, while he yet gazed, he grew tremulous and very pallid, and aghast, and crying with a loud voice, 'This is indeed *Life* itself!' turned suddenly to regard his beloved:—*She was dead!*"

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Why does the author place the scene of the story in a château?
2. Write a narrative, in the manner of Poe, that will explain why the man who took refuge in the château was wounded.

3. Write a narrative that will explain why the château was deserted.
4. Describe the château.
5. Describe the apartment.
6. How does the setting increase the effect of the story?
7. Describe the oval portrait.
8. What made the portrait fascinating?
9. Tell the story of the artist's bride.
10. In what respects does the quotation from the old volume criticize life?
11. In what respects is the quotation poetic in language and in form?
12. Why does the author end the story so abruptly?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"The Oval Portrait" is a story touched with somberness and gloom. In it the author suggests a desperate encounter, succeeded by flight into the mountains and the finding of refuge in a mysteriously deserted and richly furnished château. There the story of an old picture reveals the tragedy of a happy young life sacrificed to the demands of art. In some respects the story resembles Robert Browning's poem, "My Last Duchess," in which a happy-hearted young woman with smiles for every one is sacrificed to the domineering pride of a self-centered duke.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, invent a narrative that will relate the discovery that some person was sacrificed to the selfish demands of another. Make elaborate and suggestive use of setting and thus produce appropriate atmospheric effect.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. A man so devotes himself to business that he sacrifices the happiness of his family.
2. A person so follows a life of pleasure that he brings sorrow to people who are dear to him.
3. A person is so intent on amassing a fortune that he loses real happiness.
4. A young woman so gives herself to frivolity that she loses health.
5. A young man spends so much time in sports that he sacrifices scholarship.

FIFTY FATHOMS DOWN*

By Morgan Robertson

Morgan Robertson (1861–1915) was born in Oswego, New York. When he was sixteen years old he became a sailor before the mast, and thereafter spent most of his time at sea until he was twenty-five. He wrote several novels and a great number of short stories concerning ships and sailors. Although he was largely a self-educated man, he showed keen interest in science, amassed a fund of accurate information, and wrote many stories based on technical knowledge. Among his works are *Spun-Yarn* (1898), *Masters of Men* (1901), *Shipmates* (1901), *Down to the Sea* (1905), and *Sinful Peck* (1903).

THE United States submarine torpedo-boat *Diver* had come to the surface to blow out, to recharge her storage-battery, and to restore her supply of compressed air to its working pressure of two thousand pounds to the square inch. The first two were accomplished, but, there being something wrong with the air-compressor motor, the last was delayed while the machinist and two electricians swore over it—or under it, for it was at arm's-length overhead—and the boat, in the awash or diving condition, ran along under her gasoline engine. Breen, temporary commander, raised his boyish face up through the conning-tower hatch, the hinged lid of which was held upright by a strong spring, and looked around at the night. It was pitch dark and starless, but, over to the east, the upper limb of a full moon was just appearing above the horizon. The hinged lid of the hatch prevented a view astern; the engine exhaust drowned the lesser sounds of the sea.

A curious, rushing sound mingled with the puffing of the

* From *Down to the Sea,* by Morgan Robertson, copyright, 1905, by Harper & Brothers. Reprinted by special permission of Harper & Brothers.

exhaust, a voice high above and astern sang out, "Something under the bow, sir!" and a huge bulk of blacker darkness struck the small, semi-submerged craft a glancing blow from astern, heeled it a little, and bore it under. Breen was washed downward by the inrush of water, but held a grip on the conning-tower ladder, and found voice to call out: "Stop the engine! Shut off the gas!" Then, against that almost solid column of descending salt water, he fought his way upward until, face above the hatch again, but looking now into the blackness of the deep sea, he seized the hand-hold of the hatch-lid and pulled it down. It closed with a force that would have shivered anything but armor steel, and Breen, half drowned, fell to the floor of the handling-room. As he raised himself he could hear faintly, through the steel walls from the void without, the lessening pulsations of a steamer's screw.

"Run down!" he gasped, choking the water from his lungs and supporting himself by the ladder, for the boat was rolling twenty degrees. "Anything carried away?"

"Seems not, lieutenant," answered the chief-electrician—"nothing but the auxiliary motor. I've burned it out—had my hand on the switch when the jar came. But we're sinking, sir."

"We've taken in more than the reserve buoyancy, surely," said Breen, looking at the depth-indicator, which already marked forty feet. The hand moved, as he looked, to fifty, sixty—and more.

"Blow out every tank!" he ordered.

The ballast and trimming tanks were emptied, and the scant store of compressed air was further lessened thereby; but, though the indicator hand moved more slowly, it moved as steadily and as surely. The boat was still sinking.

"Start the motor and connect up the pumps!" said Breen. "What am I thinking about—wasting time and air over tanks with all this water washing about?"

"Can't, sir," answered a machinist from the neighborhood of the engine. "The motor's soaked through. A lot came down the air-pipe 'fore I could close it, and all the rest has come aft, too."

Breen looked and became thoughtful of face. The depressed engine compartment now held the water taken in, and the lower half of the armature was immersed. A sunken submarine, with main motor short-circuited by water and auxiliary motor burned out, without means to pump, to move, or to compress air for power, is in a serious plight. But Breen's face cleared in a moment.

"Man the hand-pump!" he said. "My God!" he added, in a semi-whisper as he glanced at the indicator. It marked one hundred!

As many men as could find room for their hands on the pump-brake put forth their strength, but could force very little water out against the pressure of the sea. They looked at Breen, doubt and anxiety showing in their faces.

"Out with the torpedoes!" he said, bravely and cheerfully. "We had a reserve buoyancy of three hundred, and we're carrying several thousand pounds of steel and gun-cotton that we won't need right away. Disconnect the levers and unscrew the detonator!"

Whitehead torpedoes—mechanical fish—are merely aimed and started by the craft that carries them. They propel themselves by their own motive power, steer themselves in the direction originally pointed, and—at an under-water depth automatically chosen—if they hit nothing within a practical radius, lock their engines and rise by a reserve buoyancy to float and be recovered. Breen's last order carried a meaning to these men that was reflected back in their pale faces as they removed the starting-levers and the small fan-wheel which, by the torpedo's motion, would bring the detonator into action. "Any port in a storm," muttered one. "They're good life-buoys on a pinch." They withdrew the Whitehead always carried in the tube, prepared it like the others, inserted it, and closed the breech; then, opening the bow port, they turned on the compressed air, and a cough, a thud, and an inrush of water testified that the torpedo was out. They blew out the tube, closed the port, opened the breech, and hauled forward another torpedo, while Breen studied the depth-indicator.

"One hundred and ten," he called, "and still sinking! Out with them all, quickly!"

The sinking boat was now slightly "by the stern" from the expenditure of the water that had replaced the torpedo, which water is, under normal conditions, retained in a tank and shifted aft to others as torpedoes are hauled forward, in order to maintain the horizontal trim of the boat; but they were expending weights now, and it mattered not if the boat stood on her tail for a time, provided she floated. She did give promise of the erect attitude, reaching an angle of ten degrees with the release of the third torpedo; but at this moment there was a shock and a shudder through the steel hull, then a bumping, scraping sound.

"Good!" exclaimed Breen. "We've reached the bottom, one hundred and twenty feet down. Three hundred and fifty's the crushing-point."

"But we're scraping along with the tide, sir," answered one of the men, "and we may go deeper."

"Then we'll find the torpedoes right above us," said Breen, promptly. "Out with the other two."

Out they went, one after the other, and after them the water in the tube. The boat lifted her bow to an angle of twenty-five degrees, but the scraping and bumping of the propeller-guard on the bottom continued, and the depth-indicator told them that she was now one hundred and thirty feet below the surface, and dragging down-hill. The men at the hand-pump quit the fruitless labor and joined them. They looked into one another's pale faces. Only Breen's showed decision.

"Draw lots," he said, bringing forth a box of matches from his pocket, "as to who goes first."

"You mean last, sir, don't you?" asked the engineer. "It makes no difference who goes first on the chance of swimming up over a hundred feet to find a torpedo at night; but some one must remain to fire out the last man, sir."

"I remain," said Breen. "No arguments about this. I am the commander, and should have kept a better lookout."

"But, lieutenant," said the other engineer, "can't we shoot

the boat up on a slant by the engine? The sparkers are out of water."

"The conning-tower hatch would still be under water, and we would be far away from the torpedoes. They are now right above us. We know that much. Who goes first, now?"

"I will," said one of the trimming-tank men. "But, lieutenant," he added, "we can swim up in two minutes, I should think, and I've held my breath three; but how'll we know which way to swim? It's night up there. We can't see."

"If your head and stomach don't tell you, let your knife hang loose by the lanyard. It'll hang down. Swim parallel. Hold on. Keep your shoes on"—the man was shedding them—"take all weights out that you can. Put your coats on, all of you. It's a cold night up above. You'll need your coats riding a torpedo."

"Good-by, sir. Good-by, boys—all 'round. No time to shake hands. If I find a Whitehead I'll keep singin' out."

He threw open the breech of the tube and crawled in. A man stood with his hand on the compressed-air valve; another stood by the bow-port lever; Breen himself was at the breech.

"Take a good breath when you hear the breech closed," he called in, and was answered. Then he slammed to the swinging breech-door, locked it, and waved his hand to his men. They knew the drill. Water was admitted at once, the bow port was lifted, compressed air was turned on, there was the usual cough and thud and inrush of water, and a man under a pressure of four atmospheres was swimming, somewhere, through water black as night, guided only by his knife lanyard or the *feel* of his head and stomach.

The tube was blown out and another man said good-by and crawled in. He was ejected. Then the performance was repeated again and again, while Breen watched the dials that told of depth and inclination, and listened for a cessation of the scraping sound of the propeller-guard. There was none, and both inclination and depth registers showed increase.

He himself ejected the last man, and stood up, alone, in a boat one hundred and forty feet beneath the surface of the

sea, her bow lifted to an angle of thirty degrees from the horizontal, her main motor drowned and her auxiliary motor burned. There was one chance in a million that he would be rescued; but, as he stood on the slanting floor of the handling-room, the hope of this one chance came to him, for the scraping and bumping had ceased.

He looked at the depth-indicator and waited. No; she was not rising from the expenditure of weights, as he had hoped for a moment; the propeller-guard must have caught on some projection on the bottom, and was holding her from drifting farther with the tide. This was proved to him by a new and faint sound coming through the steel walls of his coffin—the sound of rustling water passing by. But it soon gave way to the bumping and scraping; and when, two hours later, this grew fainter and finally ceased, and he again looked at the depth-indicator, he saw a reading of three hundred. He was fifty fathoms below the surface.

Breen's emotions for the next few hours need not be recorded. They were mainly concerned with that one chance in a million, and ended in prayer; but following the prayer came the much used and abused, homely but practical, reflection that the Lord helps those who help themselves, and he arose from the floor where he had thrown himself and looked around—first, at the air-pressure indicators. All but two registered at zero; he had two tanks at two thousand pounds pressure, and he could have blown out a few more torpedoes, or men, or tanks of water, but not that water washing about aft. He thought of the storage-battery beneath the flooring—ninety large jars of sulphuric acid, in danger from contact with that washing salt water—and, removing the hatch, inspected it. He found that the last jars aft lifted six inches above the water-level, and, knowing that they were designed for an inclination of forty-five degrees, was reassured on this point. Salt water and sulphuric acid are a bad combination in a closed compartment; and his air was already bad enough from the fumes of smoking insulation and the leakage of gasoline from the engine.

He looked at the burned-out motor overhead in the han-

dling-room. It worked the air-compressor and one of the bilge-pumps, the other being connected to the main motor, under water and equally useless. He had a naval officer's knowledge of electricity and motors, acquired at Annapolis, and this told him that it would be hopeless, even for an expert mechanic, to attempt rewinding that small motor with the dried-out wires of the other. He studied the main motor, nearly buried in water. When dry it worked with seventy horse-power. It would pump out, against the pressure of the sea, the water that kept the boat down. If clear of this water it would dry out—in time. In what time? Breen had fifteen days' supply of food and water for a crew of eight—one hundred and twenty days' supply for himself. His air-supply was short, but—suffocation is a long death.

The lower part of the armature and fully half the height of the field magnets were still immersed. He needed more weight forward or less aft; and as his eye roved about the maze of fixtures—pipes, valves, and machinery—it rested upon the useless gasoline-engine—a two-thousand pound weight. Removing his coat, he first made sure that the gas-feed valve was screwed tight, then, delving for wrenches, spanners, and hammers in the engineer's locker, attacked the engine. He was working for life, and such work is exhilarating for a time. Breen sang while he worked.

Two weeks later he was not singing. His clothing a greasy envelope of rags and shreds, his face haggard, his eyes sunken from too close looking into the eyes of death, he dragged forward with bleeding hands the connecting-rod of the after-cylinder, and piled up a scrap-heap of similar fragments beside the torpedo-tube in the bow. The engine was stripped to the supporting column that bore the weight of the motor and the pump, and the boat was not yet on an even keel; but the last lower coil of the field-magnet was lifted from the water by the shifting of the weight, and when he had cleared the storage-battery wires from all contact with water he rewarded himself with a few deep inhalations from his nearly exhausted compressed-air supply, and sat down to wait—until the insulation was dry.

Being a government officer, not yet relieved from duty, he had kept the log, and knew the flight of time by this and the clock; and in another week he realized with sinking heart that the motor was *not drying out*. A little reflection told him why: in the sealed-up hull the air was saturated with moisture, and no more evaporation could take place. In a fit of utter and suicidal desperation he turned on the last few pounds of his air-supply and lay down, weary of work, weary of thought, hoping now, if death would not come speedily, that unconsciousness would—that he might at least be relieved of the torture of headache that now afflicted him. And unconsciousness came, in the form of sweet, refreshing sleep, brought on by the suicidal extravagance in the air. And when he wakened there was a thought, or the remnant of one, a lingering survival of something he had dreamed—a phrase repeating itself, and dwindling away, as the details of valve and piping took form before his eyes. It was of gases, this thought—of a drying agent for gases—something he had studied years ago at school. A drying agent for gases? What was it? Then it came to him out of the forgotten chemistry in his subconscious mind: "Sulphuric acid."

He had ninety jars of it under his feet. He had lead and copper piping in his scrap-heap forward. He had two electric fans used for ventilation on the surface, and a blower, fixed in the air-pipe, but available on a pinch—all four wired and ready, with a thirty-six-hundred-ampere-hour battery to drive them. Wild with hope, he sprang to his feet and went to work. In three hours he had constructed from the back of his coat a cone-shaped funnel that stretched around the wire guard of a fan-wheel; and this he fitted onto the end of a length of lead pipe, the other end of which was all but immersed in the acid of a battery jar in the hold. With the fan buzzing and blowing into this funnel, and a stream of air ruffling the surface of the acid, he yet went on contriving; and with another fan, unscrewed from its shelf and rewired to a new location, he caught this dried air as it rose and drove it aft over the motor. Smiling like a child with a toy, Breen sat down and

watched it, his mind intent upon chemistry, that he once had hated, that he had so completely forgotten.

The air was again very bad; his head was aching as it had ached before, and he needed no clear recollection of the forgotten science to know that the dominant irritant was the carbonic-acid gas from his lungs. How to purify the air he did not know. This boat was not equipped with the apparatus for such purpose that he had read of in plans and specifications, and all the chemistry that would come to him was the old, familiar class-room test for carbonic-acid gas, or—as he liked to call it now, with his mind on chemistry—carbon dioxide. This testing reagent was lime-water, but the chemical term for it was beyond him. He went to sleep at last, thinking of lime-water—lime-water, and the chemical name for it.

As he slept, fitfully, with intervals of half-waking thought, chemical terms, long forgotten and bearing no seeming relation to lime-water, ran jumblingly through his head—potassium chlorate, manganese dioxide, chloride of sodium, chlorhydric acid. These persisted through the jumble, and remained when he had wakened. He repeated and remembered them. But what had they to do with lime-water? Nothing, that he could remember. Chloride of sodium was common salt, he knew, and he had plenty of it, dissolved in water—more than he wanted. Chlorhydric acid—hydrochloric acid—muriatic acid—an acid containing no oxygen, the one gas that he needed so badly—formed of hydrogen and chloric—chloride, chlorine gas. Good, so far. Chlorine—also a constituent of the salt in his bilge-water. But what of it? It was oxygen that he wanted. Potassium chlorate—chlorate of potassium. This contained chlorine. Manganese dioxide contained oxygen; but what did it mean? Why should these elements and compounds come to his mind? He had something of blind faith in the relevancy of thought, but he wanted to know only of lime-water, with which he could catch the carbon dioxide in the air and free the oxygen. This last thought was an advance, but he could go no further in this direction. His mind returned to chlorhydric acid, to hydrogen, to chlorine. How were they

made? They were all there—in his sea-water. But why these persisting thoughts? His waking thought of sulphuric acid as a drying agent meant something. Did it mean more? Sulphuric acid, one of the most powerful chemical reagents known—the most powerful electrolyte—electro—electrolysis —"Hurrah!"

He bounded to his feet. He had it. Electrolysis of water yielded oxygen and hydrogen. But why had manganese dioxide and potassium chlorate so persisted in his mind? And lime-water—what had that to do with his problem, now solved by electrolysis?

Slowly the memory of school-day lessons learned by rote filtered up from the past—of the test-tube manufactured of oxygen by the union of these chemicals in the presence of heat. And lime-water, with its affinity for carbon dioxide? There was no lime on board, hence no lime-water. But there was water—too much. Where was the affinity? It was slower in coming, but it came—the old lessons learned by rote and forgotten. "Carbon dioxide is soluble in water, volume for volume." "Oxygen is but slightly soluble in water—about three parts in a hundred."

"I see how it is," he said, with an infantile smile that had come to his boy's face in this trouble. "It's the subliminal self that remembers everything; and when you've guessed all around the subject it pops out and hits you when you've touched it."

He found some spare insulated wire among the stores, and rigged two lengths from the poles of the battery, scraping the ends and immersing them in the salt water. A few bubbles arose, then ceased.

"Funny how things come back when you need them," he said, as he pulled up the wires. "I want platinum electrodes and solder and soldering fluid—chloride of zinc—zinc cut by hydrochloric acid. Wonder if I'll have to make my acid?"

He did not. He found a soldering outfit in the locker, then rummaged his scrap-heap forward for platinum sparkers, and, finding very little of the precious metal, ruthlessly smashed all but three of the electric bulbs that lighted his prison,

robbing them of the platinum wires that led the current into the carbons.

Clumsily—for he was but a theoretical mechanic—he soldered the ends of the platinum wires and fragments to the copper ends of his terminals, about half to each, making brush-like electrodes of the largest possible surface-exposure. Then he immersed them, and was gratified at the result. Bubbles arose in generous quantity.

"Now, which is which?" he said, as he leaned over them. "Let's think. Water—hydrogen and oxygen—H_2O—two parts hydrogen to one of oxygen. But the bubbles seem about the same size."

He stopped and inhaled deeply of the air over one column of bursting bubbles; a little of this brought on a curious feeling of faintness, with a desire to draw a longer breath.

"Hydrogen, surely," he said. "Now the other."

A half-inhalation over the other bubbles sent him back, coughing and choking, with a bitter, astringent taste in his throat.

"No," he said, as he pulled up the wire. "That is not oxygen. It's some other gas. I must separate them, somehow."

He racked his brains for the rest of the day—until his clock told him that sleeping-time had arrived—but could not remember more of his chemistry. He could only fix in his mind a few chemical facts not forgotten: that he was using up the existing oxygen by combining it, in his lungs, with carbon to form carbon dioxide, ten per cent. of which, in the air, might be fatal; that the hydrogen which he would make, with his oxygen, was non-poisonous, like the nitrogen of the air, but that, there being less of it as a diluent, he might suffer from a preponderance of oxygen; and that this astringent gas that would also evolve from the salt water was a deadly poison to be got rid of. But how? Was it carbon dioxide? He did not need to sleep on the problem; he had already slept upon and solved it. It came to him suddenly in the formulated sentences of the morning. Water would absorb carbon dioxide, volume for volume, while oxygen would only give up three parts to a hundred.

"What a fool I am!" he muttered. "I can simply blow the whole mixture back into the water again and again, and get rid of everything but the oxygen and hydrogen."

The motor was dryer to the touch, but still much too damp for use; so, for the present, he left his air-drying apparatus intact, and constructed a supplementary pneumatic feed system that would have scandalized a mechanical or electrical engineer, but was a triumph of driven genius to poor Breen, dying of headache at the bottom of the sea.

First, he reversed the polarity of the fixed blower in the air-pipe overhead, so that it worked downward; then he propped up and secured a section of gas feed-piping that would catch the mixed bubbles as they burst, and deliver the mixture to this blower. Below this fan he suspended a fairly air-tight funnel formed of the seat and one leg of his trousers, and to the funnel secured another length of copper piping, the lower end of which he hammered flat, so that it would spread the flow of gases to a fan-shaped stream conducive to a large number of smaller bubbles. This end he immersed in the deepest part of the flooded engine-room, sacrificed his shirt to form a hood over the bubbles that would rise, and under this hood arranged his original funnel and fan that drove air throught the lead pipe to the sulphuric acid. He had contrived an apparatus to manufacture two volumes of hydrogen to one volume of oxygen, with an unknown quantity of poisonous gas—that would suck into itself the foul air of the closed hull and drive it, with the mixed gases, in a divided stream into the purifying water—and that would force the oxygen which arose onto the drying sulphuric acid, to be then sent back over the damp motor. Arranging his battery wires in the water, he turned on all the fans and tested the result by his sense of smell. There was but the slightest bad odor in the blast from the last fan—not enough to distress him; and, utterly tired out, Breen went to sleep as happy as a man may be on the cold sea-bottom without shirt or trousers and barely reprieved from lingering death.

When he awakened, his fans still buzzed merrily, his headache was gone, and the motor much dryer to the touch. His

problem seemed to have been solved, for there were no more chemical terms or "guesses" remaining from his sleep. Yet, as he felt of the damp motor and noticed the hydrogen bubbles rising and escaping into the air without going through the drying process, he felt, and obeyed, a strong impulse to turn them into the pipe that caught the others.

"Can't do any harm to dry the hydrogen," he mused; "and it would mix with the oxygen later, in any case, while the water won't absorb it—only the carbon dioxide."

A few moments later he noticed an utter absence of the bad odor in the blast from the acid to the motor, and felt only a slight increment of gratification. It was long after, with a larger experience of and dependence upon the infallibility of subliminal promptings that he realized that it was *not to dry* the hydrogen that he had turned it into his pipes.

From this on his problems were mechanical; he was interested in the rapidly drying motor and its potencies when he dared turn the current into it. He realized these potencies —he knew that the seventy-horse-power motor could pump out the water and bring her to the surface; but knowing, too, that under the coils moisture would remain long after the surface windings were dry, and that a short-circuiting of coils might rack the insulation to pieces by the formation of steam, he waited a full week after the last dampness had apparently gone; then, uncoupling the motor from the shaft and turning on the switch, he carefully moved the controller and gave it momentary contact. A thin cloud arose from the motor and the armature moved an inch. He inspected the cloud; it seemed to be steam, not smoke, and he tried it again with longer contact. The armature moved farther, and again he shut off the current, assured himself that there was no burning, and turned it on. This time he left it on, and stood over the motor, watching the steaming armature slowly turn at about the rate of a steamboat's paddle-wheel, while, the commutator brushes threw out sparkings six inches long. His theoretical knowledge of electricity told him that these sparks indicated a waste of current; and he noticed that when his body interposed between the motor and the blast of dried

air from the last fan in his system the sparks were reduced to minute points, hardly visible. With nothing to do now until his motor gained power enough to pump, he busied himself in constructing a hood that would enclose the commutator and brushes, using his undershirt for material and singing as he worked. A man may be joyful at the bottom of the sea, shivering with cold in one garment, provided he is hopeful. And Breen was hopeful; his hood was a success; it stopped the extravagant sparking, but did not save enough current to work the pump, which fact he learned by connecting it. The armature moved faster, but stopped short against the small resistance of the inert water in the induction-pipe. So he turned off the current, overhauled and lubricated the pump, and waited.

He was very happy now, singing and talking to himself, while his heart beat a thumping accompaniment to the music, and the steel walls of his sunken prison rang with his words, delivered in shouts. He was not in the least cast down when two of his lights burned out, and he danced forward in ragtime step, secured the remaining bulb, and danced aft with it, adjusting it just forward of the motor, where it would illumine his system of buzzing fans and bursting bubbles.

He did not enter up the log this day, nor keep further track of the passage of time, being too lofty of soul to concern himself with such trifles; nor did he go to sleep when the time for it came around. Who would sleep with a seventy-horse-power motor dying out and needing attention, with a beautiful plant manufacturing, purifying, and drying air—sweet, cool air, to be breathed by himself, and no other? How pleasant it felt to his burning face and tingling fingers when he placed himself in its way! The world above, with its millions of men, had millions of cubic miles of air to breathe no better than his, that he had made for himself. This thought so pleased him that he put it to rhyme, and sang it to the steel walls in the voice of a boatswain's mate in bad weather. Louder he sang, and louder, until the music went out of his voice and left it a screech.

There were a few hours of this, when he fell down near the motor and lay there.

Years later, as it seemed, he awakened in pitch-black darkness, with an irritating, pungent odor in his nostrils, a burning sensation in his throat, a clattering, rushing, roaring sound in his ears, and a pain in his head such as he had never felt before. Only one sensation could he place—the odor in his nostrils, the astringent action that he knew so well. Then his position and plight came back to him by degrees. His last light had burned out. His air-plant was still working, but the poisonous gas was escaping. How and why?

He reached out, felt the supporting column of the engine, and located himself; then he crawled to the different parts of his pipe-and-fan system, inspecting them by the sense of touch. Everything was as he had left it—the wires still fed bubbles into the pipe to the upper fan; the last fan still caught the air as it rose from the acid and sent it over the motor. Perhaps the motor would now work the pump. He found the switch and controller in the darkness, turned on the current, and felt his way back. The armature was turning—just a little faster than before. Shutting off the current, he coupled on the pump, and again gave power to the motor, only to find that the pump stopped it. The solid, inert, incompressible water in the induction-pipe could not be stirred. Yet there was power in the motor; he had tried to stop the armature with his hands, but could not. Two men could not—nor three, by the way it felt. If he could multiply that power? If he could give it purchase? If the water were more yielding—compressible—so that the motor, once started, would go on? Compressible, like air?

Air—compressible air. He had too much air—bad air, too. It gave him the pain in his head and the roaring in his ears. Crawling forward as far as he could go, he found a sweeter atmosphere, and thought it out. There was little logic or coherency in his thoughts; he only wanted to devise means to get rid of that poisonous flow of gas, which came from he knew not what defect in his apparatus, but which he could

only stop by stopping the supply of oxygen. The air-compressor motor was burned out, otherwise he could pump air into any of the tanks, and outboard when the pressure was great enough. Could he turn that rotary bilge-pump into an air pump? Could he make an aperture in the induction-pipe above the water? Crawling aft into the stifling atmosphere near the motor, he found an elbow in the induction-pipe made up of a T-joint and a plug. Securing a wrench that fitted, he removed the plug and laid it on the motor-bed. Then he turned on the current, assured himself that the motor was turning over, and crawled forward out of the fumes. Here he remained, and after a long time, when a new sound as of the clapping of an outlet valve came to his burdened ears over the uproar, he shouted approval, and again was happy. He was pumping bad air out of the boat, and all was well with him. He was not even hungry nor thirsty; but, after a time, when the clapping of that valve in the outlet pipe had become a familiar sound, and his head had stopped aching, he felt somewhat sleepy; and, as the pile of machinery on which he lay was a hard bed, he crawled aft a little, where the greasy oilcloth flooring was softer. He went to sleep here, face upward, directly beneath the conning-tower hatch.

Years, generations, centuries passed while he lay there, and he wakened once or twice in a decade, listened to a far-away, roaring sound punctuated by the clapping of a valve, and went to sleep again. He wasted no energy in thinking about these sounds; they were the only sounds in the universe, and beyond his care and control. But at last a new sensation came to him, one that affected not his ears nor his organs of taste or smell; these were dead, killed long ago by that terrible, blistering gas. The sense of touch was lost in the all-pervading pain that saturated his whole body. The sense of light was but a memory, lost in the darkness that had engulfed him with the burning-out of the last bulb. But now, as he lay there on his back, the sense of light and sight seemed returning. Through his half-closed eyelids a dim glimmer of yellow and gray came into his brain. He opened them wide, and took in the details of the conning-tower ladder, the cir-

cular tower just above, and an occasional flickering image of the starboard deadlight moving up and down, back and forth, on the port inner surface of the tower. Light! Where did it come from? He arose painfully to his feet, and fell down. The boat was in motion, pitching somewhat, and rolling —ever so slowly—while water still washed around among the battery jars. He arose again, supporting himself by the ladder. The motor, dimly showing in the gray light, was spinning rapidly, the fans were still buzzing, the outlet valve still clapping at regular and more frequent intervals. The boat was afloat. He slowly climbed the ladder, found the hatch unscrewed—unconfined from within—exactly as he had left it ages before when he had fallen, half-drowned, from the ladder. Exerting all his strength, he pushed upward, but could not budge it. The outlook was gray through the deadlights, and only as the craft rolled did the occasional glimmer of yellow light come in from the starboard. She was on the surface, but with the top of her conning-tower awash—all below it buried. Even had he succeeded in opening the hatch against the slight weight of water sliding over it, he would only have swamped the boat and gone down again to another eternity. He looked at the motor, buzzing noisily and working a rotary pump that pumped—air.

Weakly and painfully he descended and crawled aft into the blistering fumes to where he had left the T-joint plug and the wrench; and without waiting to stop the motor he turned that air-pump back into a bilge-pump, heard the gurgling sound of water in the pipe that accompanied the last few heaves he gave to the wrench, and crawled forward to where the air burned and choked him—just a little—less. Here he waited, listening to the new cadence and slower rhythm of that clapping outlet valve and the blessed sound of gurgling water in the pipe, while the light above grew stronger and the growing hope of life in his heaving breast strove vainly to formulate itself into words of prayer to pass his cracked and bleeding lips. Then the buzzing of fans and motor softened, the rhythmic cadence of the clapping valve lessened and lowered, the gurgling sound of water ceased,

and, though the fans still whirled slowly, the pumping came to an end. The thirty-six-hundred-ampere-hour battery was exhausted, but the work was done.

Breen again climbed the ladder and pushed upward on the hatch. It yielded, and when the lifting spring was past the center it flew upright. Raising his head and shoulders through the opening, he looked across a dark, heaving sea at a full moon hanging above the horizon. He had seen it last a month before.

And the air that he took into his poisoned lungs cut like myriad knives of ice.

Three members of the Board of Inquiry, that later exonerated Breen from misuse of government property, met at the Army and Navy Club long before he was able to answer questions, and unofficially discussed him. One was a captain, another a surgeon, and a third an engineer who was also a naval constructor and an electrical expert.

"One thing we'll have to find, surely," said the captain; "that is, that the course in chemistry at Annapolis is not thorough. I passed in the subject; but what did I know? What do I know now? Who but a specialist like Breen could save the boat and his life in that manner—if he did save his life. How about that, doctor?"

"He'll pull through," said the doctor. "His hair will turn dark again, and the wrinkles will go in time. Lord, how he looked!—sixty years old, gray-haired, and emaciated. Shows what an excess of oxygen will do, even diluted with all those poisonous gases. His lungs and throat are just so much raw meat."

"But it's funny," said the engineer. "No one can deny Breen's knowledge of chemistry—that's understood. Yet—he was in my class, you know—Breen just pulled through his exams by the skin of his teeth. Chemical symbols were worse than Greek to him, and chemical equations a deep, dark mystery. And yet, down there in the dark, at the bottom, he took a chance that nothing but utter desperation would induce me to take, and made a discovery in chemical reactions

not down in any text-book and never announced by any one that I know of."

"What chance? What discovery?"

"Well, this. Electrolysis of water is easy, as we all know, and the product is oxygen and hydrogen, which can be breathed for a time; but it is an explosive mixture that would have blown him to eternity had enough of it touched a spark from either of those three fans."

"But he had enclosed the commutators."

"Yes, but that was his chance, nevertheless. Here is another: He turned both wires into the pipe leading into his fan system. He was evolving large quantities of chlorine gas from the salt in the water, and this is equally explosive when in contact with hydrogen, not only from sparks, but from strong light. Now, he was in pitch darkness, of course, and every pipe feed led directly in front of the next fan, so that the mixed gases did not touch the sparks and explode. But what he risked was the poisoning effect of that free chlorine before he made his discovery."

"And it did poison him," said the surgeon. "Ripped his mucous membrane to shreds and smithereens. But what did he discover?"

"That hydrogen and chlorine gas, mixed in utter darkness and violently agitated, will combine without explosion into hydrochloric-acid gas. Water takes up four hundred and fifty volumes of this gas, but only two and a half volumes of free chlorine, and less of hydrogen. His discovery saved his life."

"But," said the captain, dryly, "he made a much greater practical demonstration. He has proved that men may safely be ejected from torpedo tubes, that a Whitehead will support two men in the water, and that the man left to die can turn into gas and expel by the bilge-pumps the weight of water that holds down the boat. How much—in this case? Did you figure it out?"

"About a pint," said the engineer; "I must ask Breen, though, about the new reaction. It's not quite clear."

But Breen did not enlighten him.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. How many different technical facts does the first paragraph reveal?
2. What caused the sinking of the submarine?
3. What steps does Lieutenant Breen take in order to raise the submarine?
4. What is Lieutenant Breen's character?
5. How do the men escape?
6. How does the story show that "The Lord helps those who help themselves"?
7. What difficulties does Lieutenant Breen overcome?
8. How does Lieutenant Breen's memory of his student days aid him?
9. What types of apparatus does Lieutenant Breen construct?
10. What parts of Lieutenant Breen's work show most ingenuity?
11. What finally causes the submarine to come to the surface?
12. Why does the author introduce three new characters near the end of the story?
13. To what extent is the story technical, and to what extent is it romantic?
14. What characteristics make the story interesting?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"Fifty Fathoms Down" is a highly technical story with strong romantic interest. Every paragraph intimately concerns mechanics and chemistry, but every paragraph also concerns an ingenious man's heroic fight against almost unconquerable conditions.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, invent a plot that will show heroic use of technical information. Explain the technical steps so that they will be clear to the reader, but at all times throw emphasis on character as seen under stress, and on ingenuity in making practical use of knowledge.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. A boy, lost in the woods, finds food and shelter, and at last makes his way to safety.
2. Three young people in a small rowboat are blown out to sea, but they obtain food and drink, estimate their position, and steer in the proper direction to obtain safety.
3. A boy, stranded several days on a small, sandy island, obtains food and shelter and manages to signal for help.

4. One of two young people who go to the top of a high mountain meets with an accident that prevents walking. Rather than leave his companion, the other manages to signal from the mountain peak to the valley below, and thus obtain assistance.
5. A boy, in a time of great need in a lonely country place, constructs a wireless sending apparatus and summons help.

CIRCUMSTANCE *

By Harriet Prescott Spofford

Harriet Prescott Spofford (1835–1921) was born in Maine. At the age of twenty-four she contributed to the *Atlantic Monthly* work that instantly received recognition for its excellence. Throughout a long life she wrote with great success, producing some seventeen volumes of stories, essays, and poems. She won a commanding place in American literature. Among her books are the following: *Sir Rohan's Ghost* (1859), *The Amber Gods* (1860), *Azarian* (1863), *New England Legends* (1871), *The Thief in the Night* (1872), *The Marquis of Carabas* (1882), *Poems* (1882).

SHE had remained, during all that day, with a sick neighbor,—those eastern wilds of Maine in that epoch frequently making neighbors and miles synonymous,—and so busy had she been with care and sympathy that she did not at first observe the approaching night. But finally the level rays, reddening the snow, threw their gleam upon the wall, and, hastily donning cloak and hood, she bade her friends farewell and sallied forth on her return. Home lay some three miles distant, across a copse, a meadow, and a piece of woods,—the woods being a fringe on the skirts of the great forests that stretch far away into the North. That home was one of a dozen log-houses lying a few furlongs apart from each other, with their half-cleared demesnes separating them at the rear from a wilderness untrodden save by stealthy native or deadly panther tribes.

She was in a nowise exalted frame of spirit,—on the contrary, rather depressed by the pain she had witnessed and the fatigue she had endured; but in certain temperaments such a condition throws open the mental pores, so to speak,

* From *The Amber Gods* (1860), by Harriet Prescott Spofford.

and renders one receptive of every influence. Through the little copse she walked slowly, with her cloak folded about her, lingering to imbibe the sense of shelter, the sunset filtered in purple through the mist of woven spray and twig, the companionship of growth not sufficiently dense to band against her, the sweet home-feeling of a young and tender wintry wood. It was therefore just on the edge of the evening that she emerged from the place and began to cross the meadow-land. At one hand lay the forest to which her path wound; at the other the evening star hung over a tide of failing orange that slowly slipped down the earth's broad side to sadden other hemispheres with sweet regret. Walking rapidly now, with her eyes wide-open, she distinctly saw in the air before her what was not there a moment ago, a winding-sheet,—cold, white, and ghastly, waved by the likeness of four wan hands,—that rose with a long inflation, and fell in rigid folds, while a voice, shaping itself from the hollowness above, spectral and melancholy, sighed,— "The Lord have mercy on the people! The Lord have mercy on the people!" Three times the sheet with its corpse-covering outline waved beneath the pale hands, and the voice, awful in its solemn and mysterious depth, sighed, "The Lord have mercy on the people!" Then all was gone, the place was clear again, the gray sky was obstructed by no deathly blot; she looked about her, shook her shoulders decidedly, and, pulling on her hood, went forward once more.

She might have been a little frightened by such an apparition, if she had led a life of less reality than frontier settlers are apt to lead; but dealing with hard fact does not engender a flimsy habit of mind, and this woman was too sincere and earnest in her character, and too happy in her situation, to be thrown by antagonism, merely, upon superstitious fancies and chimeras of the second-sight. She did not even believe herself subject to an hallucination, but smiled simply, a little vexed that her thought could have framed such a glamor from the day's occurrences, and not sorry to lift the bough of the warder of the woods and enter and disappear in their sombre path. If she had been imaginative, she would

have hesitated at her first step into a region whose dangers were not visionary; but I suppose that the thought of a little child at home would conquer that propensity in the most habituated. So, biting a bit of spicy birch, she went along. Now and then she came to a gap where the trees had been partially felled, and here she found that the lingering twilight was explained by that peculiar and perhaps electric film which sometimes sheathes the sky in diffused light for many hours before a brilliant aurora. Suddenly, a swift shadow, like the fabulous flying-dragon, writhed through the air before her, and she felt herself instantly seized and borne aloft. It was that wild beast—the most savage and serpentine and subtle and fearless of our latitudes—known by hunters as the Indian Devil, and he held her in his clutches on the broad floor of a swinging fir-bough. His long sharp claws were caught in her clothing, he worried them sagaciously a little, then, finding that ineffectual to free them, he commenced licking her bare arm with his rasping tongue and pouring over her the wide streams of his hot, fœtid breath, So quick had this flashing action been that the woman had had no time for alarm; moreover, she was not of the screaming kind: but now, as she felt him endeavoring to disentangle his claws, and the horrid sense of her fate smote her, and she saw instinctively the fierce plunge of those weapons, the long strips of living flesh torn from her bones, the agony, the quivering disgust, itself a worse agony,—while by her side, and holding her in his great lithe embrace, the monster crouched, his white tusks whetting and gnashing, his eyes glaring through all the darkness like balls of red fire,—a shriek, that rang in every forest hollow, that startled every winter-housed thing, that stirred and woke the least needle of the tasselled pines, tore through her lips. A moment afterward, the beast left the arm, once white, now crimson, and looked up alertly.

She did not think at this instant to call upon God. She called upon her husband. It seemed to her that she had but one friend in the world; that was he; and again the cry, loud, clear, prolonged, echoed through the woods. It was not the

shriek that disturbed the creature at his relish; he was not born in the woods to be scared of an owl, you know; what then? It must have been the echo, most musical, most resonant, repeated and yet repeated, dying with long sighs of sweet sound, vibrated from rock to river and back again from depth to depth of cave and cliff. Her thought flew after it; she knew, that, even if her husband heard it, he yet could not reach her in time; she saw that while the beast listened he would not gnaw,—and this she *felt* directly, when the rough, sharp, and multiplied stings of his tongue retouched her arm. Again her lips opened by instinct, but the sound that issued thence came by reason. She had heard that music charmed wild beasts,—just this point between life and death intensified every faculty,—and when she opened her lips the third time, it was not for shrieking but for singing.

A little thread of melody stole out, a rill of tremulous motion; it was the cradle-song with which she rocked her baby;—how could she sing that? And then she remembered the baby sleeping rosily on the long settee before the fire,—the father cleaning his gun, with one foot on the green wooden rundle,—the merry light from the chimney dancing out and through the room, on the rafters of the ceiling with their tassels of onions and herbs, on the log walls painted with lichens and festooned with apples, on the king's-arm slung across the shelf with the old pirate's-cutlass, on the snow-pile of the bed, and on the great brass clock,—dancing, too, and lingering on the baby, with his fringed-gentian eyes, his chubby fists clenched on the pillow, and his fine breezy hair fanning with the motion of his father's foot. All this struck her in one, and made a sob of her breath, and she ceased.

Immediately the long red tongue thrust forth again. Before it touched, a song sprang to her lips, a wild sea-song, such as some sailor might be singing far out on trackless blue water that night, the shrouds whistling with frost and the sheets glued in ice,—a song with the wind in its burden and the spray in its chorus. The monster raised his head and flared

the fiery eyeballs upon her, then fretted the imprisoned claws a moment and was quiet; only the breath like the vapor from some hell-pit still swathed her. Her voice, at first faint and fearful, gradually lost its quaver, grew under her control and subject to her modulation; it rose on long swells, it fell in subtile cadences, now and then its tones pealed out like bells from distant belfries on fresh sonorous mornings. She sang the song through, and, wondering lest his name of Indian Devil were not his true name, and if he would not detect her, she repeated it. Once or twice now, indeed, the beast stirred uneasily, turned, and made the bough sway at his movement. As she ended, he snapped his jaws together, and tore away the fettered member, curling it under him with a snarl,—when she burst into the gayest reel that ever answered a fiddle-bow. How many a time she had heard her husband play it on the homely fiddle made by himself from birch and cherry-wood! how many a time she had seen it danced on the floor of their one room, to the patter of wooden clogs and the rustle of homespun petticoat! how many a time she had danced it herself!—and did she not remember once, as they joined clasps for eight-hands-round, how it had lent its gay, bright measure to her life? And here she was singing it alone, in the forest, at midnight, to a wild beast! As she sent her voice trilling up and down its quick oscillations between joy and pain, the creature who grasped her uncurled his paw and scratched the bark from the bough; she must vary the spell; and her voice spun leaping along the projecting points of tune of a hornpipe. Still singing, she felt herself twisted about with a low growl and a lifting of the red lip from the glittering teeth; she broke the hornpipe's thread, and commenced unravelling a lighter, livelier thing, an Irish jig. Up and down and round about her voice flew, the beast threw back his head so that the diabolical face fronted hers, and the torrent of his breath prepared her for his feast as the anaconda slimes his prey. Frantically she darted from tune to tune; his restless movements followed her. She tired herself with dancing and vivid national airs, growing feverish and singing spasmodically as she felt her horrid

tomb yawning wider. Touching in this manner all the slogan and keen clan cries, the beast moved again, but only to lay the disengaged paw across her with heavy satisfaction. She did not dare to pause; through the clear cold air, the frosty starlight, she sang. If there were yet any tremor in the tone, it was not fear,—she had learned the secret of sound as last; nor could it be chill,—far too high a fever throbbed her pulses; it was nothing but the thought of the log-house and of what might be passing within it. She fancied the baby stirring in his sleep and moving his pretty lips,—her husband rising and opening the door, looking out after her, and wondering at her absence. She fancied the light pouring through the chink and then shut in again with all the safety and comfort and joy, her husband taking down the fiddle and playing lightly with his head inclined, playing while she sang, while she sang for her life to an Indian Devil. Then she knew he was fumbling for and finding some shining fragment and scoring it down the yellowing hair, and unconsciously her voice forsook the wild war-tunes and drifted into the half-gay, half-melancholy Rosin the Bow.

Suddenly she woke pierced with a pang, and the daggered tooth penetrating her flesh;—dreaming of safety, she had ceased singing and lost it. The beast had regained the use of all his limbs, and now, standing and raising his back, bristling and foaming, with sounds that would have been like hisses but for their deep and fearful sonority, he withdrew step by step toward the trunk of the tree, still with his flaming balls upon her. She was all at once free, on one end of the bough, twenty feet from the ground. She did not measure the distance, but rose to drop herself down, careless of any death, so that it were not this. Instantly, as if he scanned her thoughts, the creature bounded forward with a yell and caught her again in his dreadful hold. It might be that he was not greatly famished; for, as she suddenly flung up her voice again, he settled himself composedly on the bough, still clasping her with invisible pressure to his rough, ravenous breast, and listening in a fascination to the sad, strange U-la-lu that now moaned forth in loud, hollow tones above him.

He half closed his eyes, and sleepily reopened and shut them again.

What rending pains were close at hand! Death! and what a death! worse than any other that is to be named! Water, be it cold or warm, that which buoys up blue icefields, or which bathes tropical coasts with currents of balmy bliss, is yet a gentle conqueror, kisses as it kills, and draws you down gently through darkening fathoms to its heart. Death at the sword is the festival of trumpet and bugle and banner, with glory ringing out around you and distant hearts thrilling through yours. No gnawing disease can bring such hideous end as this; for that is a fiend bred of your own flesh, and this—is it a fiend, this living lump of appetites? What dread comes with the thought of perishing in flames! but fire, let it leap and hiss never so hotly, is something too remote, too alien, to inspire us with such loathly horror as a wild beast; if it have a life, that life is too utterly beyond our comprehension. Fire is not half ourselves; as it devours, arouses neither hatred nor disgust; is not to be known by the strength of our lower natures let loose; does not drip our blood into our faces from foaming chaps, nor mouth nor slaver above us with vitality. Let us be ended by fire, and we are ashes, for the winds to bear, the leaves to cover; let us be ended by wild beasts, and the base, cursed thing howls with us forever through the forest. All this she felt as she charmed him, and what force it lent to her song God knows. If her voice should fail! If the damp and cold should give her any fatal hoarseness! If all the silent powers of the forest did not conspire to help her! The dark, hollow night rose indifferently over her; the wide, cold air breathed rudely past her, lifted her wet hair and blew it down again; the great boughs swung with a ponderous strength, now and then clashed their iron lengths together and shook off a sparkle of icy spears or some long-lain weight of snow from their heavy shadows. The green depths were utterly cold and silent and stern. These beautiful haunts that all the summer were hers and rejoiced to share with her their bounty, these heavens that had yielded their largess, these stems that had thrust their blossoms into

her hands, all these friends of three moons ago forgot her now and knew her no longer.

Feeling her desolation, wild, melancholy, forsaken songs rose thereon from that frightful aerie,—weeping, wailing tunes, that sob among the people from age to age, and overflow with otherwise unexpressed sadness,—all rude, mournful ballads,—old tearful strains, that Shakespeare heard the vagrants sing, and that rise and fall like the wind and tide,—sailor-songs, to be heard only in lone mid-watches beneath the moon and stars,—ghastly rhyming romances, such as that famous one of the Lady Margaret, when

> "She slipped on her gown of green
> A piece below the knee,—
> And 'twas all a long cold winter's night
> A dead corse followed she."

Still the beast lay with closed eyes, yet never relaxing his grasp. Once a half-whine of enjoyment escaped him,—he fawned his fearful head upon her; once he scored her cheek with his tongue: savage caresses that hurt like wounds. How weary she was! and yet how terribly awake! How fuller and fuller of dismay grew the knowledge that she was only prolonging her anguish and playing with death! How appalling the thought that with her voice ceased her existence! Yet she could not sing forever; her throat was dry and hard; her very breath was a pain; her mouth was hotter than any desert-worn pilgrim's;—if she could but drop upon her burning tongue one atom of the ice that glittered about her!—but both of her arms were pinioned in the giant's vice. She remembered the winding-sheet, and for the first time in her life shivered with spiritual fear. Was it hers? She asked herself, as she sang, what sins she had committed, what life she had led, to find her punishment so soon and in these pangs,—and then she sought eagerly for some reason why her husband was not up and abroad to find her. He failed her,—her one sole hope in life; and without being aware of it, her voice forsook the songs of suffering and sorrow for old Covenanting hymns,—hymns with which her mother had lulled her, which the class-

leader pitched in the chimney-corners,—grand and sweet Methodist hymns, brimming with melody and with all fantastic involutions of tune to suit that ecstatic worship,—hymns full of the beauty of holiness, steadfast, relying, sanctified by the salvation they had lent to those in worse extremity than hers,—for they had found themselves in the grasp of hell, while she was but in the jaws of death. Out of this strange music, peculiar to one character of faith, and than which there is none more beautiful in its degree nor owning a more potent sway of sound, her voice soared in the glorified chants of churches. What to her was death by cold or famine or wild beasts? "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," she sang. High and clear through the frore fair night, the level moonbeams splintering in the wood, the scarce glints of stars in the shadowy roof of branches, these sacred anthems rose,—rose as a hope from despair, as some snowy spray of flower-bells from blackest mould. Was she not in God's hands? Did not the world swing at His will? If this were in His great plan of providence, was it not best, and should she not accept it?

"He is the Lord our God; His judgments are in all the earth."

Oh, sublime faith of our fathers, where utter self-sacrifice alone was true love, the fragrance of whose unrequired subjection was pleasanter than that of golden censers swung in purple-vapored chancels!

Never ceasing in the rhythm of her thoughts, articulated in music as they thronged, the memory of her first communion flashed over her. Again she was in that distant place on that sweet spring morning. Again the congregation rustled out, and the few remained, and she trembled to find herself among them. How well she remembered the devout, quiet faces, too accustomed to the sacred feast to glow with their inner joy! how well the snowy linen at the altar, the silver vessels slowly and silently shifting! and as the cup approached and passed, how the sense of delicious perfume stole in and heightened the transport of her prayer, and she had seemed, looking up through the windows where the sky soared blue in constant

freshness, to feel all heaven's balms dripping from the portals, and to scent the lilies of eternal peace! Perhaps another would not have felt so much ecstasy as satisfaction on that occasion; but it is a true, if a later disciple, who has said, "The Lord bestoweth His blessings there, where He findeth the vessels empty."

"And does it need the walls of a church to renew my communion?" she asked. "Does not every moment stand a temple four-square to God? And in that morning, with its buoyant sunlight, was I any dearer to the Heart of the World than now?—'My beloved is mine, and I am his,'" she sang over and over again, with all varied inflection and profuse tune. How gently all the winter-wrapt things bent toward her then! into what relation with her had they grown! how this common dependence was the spell of their intimacy! how at one with Nature had she become! how all the night and the silence and the forest seemed to hold its breath, and to send its soul up to God in her singing! It was no longer despondency, that singing. It was neither prayer nor petition. She had left imploring, "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death! For in death there is no remembrance of thee,"—with countless other such fragments of supplication. She cried rather, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me,"—and lingered, and repeated, and sang again, "I shall be satisfied when I awake, with thy likeness."

Then she thought of the Great Deliverance, when he drew her up out of many waters, and the flashing old psalm pealed forth triumphantly:—

> "The Lord descended from above,
> and bow'd the heavens hie:
> And underneath his feet he cast
> the darknesse of the skie.
> On cherubs and on cherubins
> full royally he road:
> And on the wings of all the winds
> came flying all abroad."

She forgot how recently, and with what a strange pity for her own shapeless form that was to be, she had quaintly sung,—

> "O lovely appearance of death!
> What sight upon earth is so fair?
> Not all the gay pageants that breathe
> Can with a dead body compare!"

She remembered instead,—"In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore. God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for He shall receive me. He will swallow up death in victory." Not once now did she say, "Lord how long wilt thou look on; rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions,"—for she knew that the young lions roar after their prey and seek their meat from God. "O Lord, thou preservest man and beast!" she said.

She had no comfort or consolation in this season, such as sustained the Christian martyrs in the amphitheatre. She was not dying for her faith; there were no palms in heaven for her to wave; but how many a time had she declared,—"I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness!" And as the broad rays here and there broke through the dense covert of shade and lay in rivers of lustre on crystal sheathing and frozen fretting of trunk and limb and on the great spaces of refraction, they builded up visibly that house, the shining city on the hill, and singing. "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the North, the city of the Great King," her vision climbed to that higher picture where the angel shows the dazzling thing, the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, with its splendid battlements and gates of pearls, and its foundations, the eleventh a jacinth, the twelfth an amethyst,—with its great white throne, and the rainbow round about it, in sight like unto an emerald: "And there shall be no night there,—for the Lord giveth them light," she sang.

What whisper of dawn now rustled through the wilderness? How the night was passing! And still the beast crouched upon the bough, changing only the posture of his head, that again he might command her with those charmed eyes;—half their fire was gone; she could almost have released herself from his custody; yet, had she stirred, no one knows what malevolent instinct might have dominated anew. But of that she did not dream; long ago stripped of any expectation, she was experiencing in her divine rapture how mystically true it is that "he that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

Slow clarion cries now wound from the distance as the cocks caught the intelligence of day and re-echoed it faintly from farm to farm,—sleepy sentinels of night, sounding the foe's invasion, and translating that dim intuition to ringing notes of warning. Still she chanted on. A remote crash of brushwood told of some other beast on his depredations, or some night-belated traveller groping his way through the narrow path. Still she chanted on. The far, faint echoes of the chanticleers died into distance, the crashing of the branches grew nearer. No wild beast that, but a man's step,—a man's form in the moonlight, stalwart and strong,—on one arm slept a little child, in the other hand he held his gun. Still she chanted on.

Perhaps, when her husband last looked forth, he was half ashamed to find what a fear he felt for her. He knew she would never leave the child so long but for some direst need, —and yet he may have laughed at himself, as he lifted and wrapped it with awkward care, and, loading his gun and strapping on his horn, opened the door again and closed it behind him, going out and plunging into the darkness and dangers of the forest. He was more singularly alarmed than he would have been willing to acknowledge; as he had sat with his bow hovering over the strings, he had half believed to hear her voice mingling gayly with the instrument, till he paused and listened if she were not about to lift the latch and enter. As he drew nearer the heart of the forest, that intimation of melody seemed to grow more actual, to take body and

breath, to come and go on long swells and ebbs of the night-breeze, to increase with tune and words, till a strange shrill singing grew ever clearer, and, as he stepped into an open space of moonbeams, far up in the branches, rocked by the wind, and singing, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace," he saw his wife,—his wife,—but, great God in heaven! how? Some mad exclamation escaped him, but without diverting her. The child knew the singing voice, though never heard before in that unearthly key, and turned toward it through the veiling dreams. With a celerity almost instantaneous, it lay, in the twinkling of an eye, on the ground at the father's feet, while his gun was raised to his shoulder and levelled at the monster covering his wife with shaggy form and flaming gaze,—his wife so ghastly white, so rigid, so stained with blood, her eyes so fixidly bent above, and her lips that had indurated into the chiselled pallor of marble, parted only with that flood of solemn song.

I do not know if it were the mother-instinct that for a moment lowered her eyes,—those eyes, so lately riveted on heaven, now suddenly seeing all life-long bliss possible. A thrill of joy pierced and shivered through her like a weapon, her voice trembled in its course, her glance lost its steady strength, fever-flushes chased each other over her face, yet she never once ceased chanting. She was quite aware, that, if her husband shot now, the ball must pierce her body before reaching any vital part of the beast,—and yet better that death, by his hand, than the other. But this her husband also knew, and he remained motionless, just covering the creature with the sight. He dared not fire, lest some wound not mortal should break the spell exercised by her voice, and the beast, enraged with pain, should rend her in atoms; moreover, the light was too uncertain for his aim. So he waited. Now and then he examined his gun to see if the damp were injuring its charge, now and then he wiped the great drops from his forehead. Again the cocks crowed with the passing hour,—the last time they were heard on that night. Cheerful home sound then, how full of safety and all comfort and rest it

seemed! what sweet morning incidents of sparkling fire and sunshine, of gay household bustle, shining dresser, and cooing baby, of steaming cattle in the yard, and brimming milk-pails at the door! what pleasant voices! what laughter! what security! and here—

Now, as she sang on in the slow, endless, infinite moments, the fervent vision of God's peace was gone. Just as the grave had lost its sting, she was snatched back again into the arms of earthly hope. In vain she tried to sing, "There remaineth a rest for the people of God,"—her eyes trembled on her husband's, and she could only think of him, and of the child, and of happiness that yet might be, but what a dreadful gulf of doubt between! She shuddered now in the suspense; all calm forsook her; she was tortured with dissolving heats or frozen with icy blasts; her face contracted, growing small and pinched; her voice was hoarse and sharp,—every tone cut like a knife,—the notes became heavy to lift,—withheld by some hostile pressure,—impossible. One gasp, a convulsive effort, and there was silence,—she had lost her voice.

The beast made a sluggish movement,—stretched and fawned like one awakening,—then, as if he would have yet more of the enchantment, stirred her slightly with his muzzle. As he did so, a sidelong hint of the man standing below with the raised gun smote him; he sprung round furiously, and, seizing his prey, was about to leap into some unknown airy den of the topmost branches now waving to the slow dawn. The late moon had rounded through the sky so that her gleam at last fell full upon the bough with the fairy frosting; the wintry morning light did not yet penetrate the gloom. The woman, suspended in mid-air an instant, cast only one agonized glance beneath,—but across and through it, ere the lids could fall, shot a withering sheet of flame,—a rifle-crack, half-heard, was lost in the terrible yell of desperation that bounded after it and filled her ears with savage echoes, and in the wide arc of some eternal descent she was falling;—but the beast fell under her.

I think that the moment following must have been too sacred for us, and perhaps the three have no special interest

again till they issue from the shadows of the wilderness upon the white hills that skirt their home. The father carries the child hushed again into slumber, the mother follows with no such feeble step as might be anticipated. It is not time for reaction,—the tension not yet relaxed, the nerves still vibrant, she seems to herself like some one newly made; the night was a dream; the present stamped upon her in deep satisfaction, neither weighed nor compared with the past; if she has the careful tricks of former habit, it is as an automaton; and as they slowly climb the steep under the clear gray vault and the paling morning star, and as she stops to gather a spray of the red-rose berries or a feathery tuft of dead grasses for the chimney-piece of the log-house, or a handful of brown cones for the child's play,—of these quiet, happy folk you would scarcely dream how lately they had stolen from under the banner and encampment of the great King Death. The husband proceeds a step or two in advance; the wife lingers over a singular foot-print in the snow, stoops and examines it, then looks up with a hurried word. Her husband stands alone on the hill, his arms folded across the babe, his gun fallen,—stands defined as a silhouette against the pallid sky. What is there in their home, lying below and yellowing in the light, to fix him with such a stare? She springs to his side. There is no home there. The log-house, the barns, the neighboring farms, the fences, are all blotted out and mingled in one smoking ruin. Desolation and death were indeed there, and beneficence and life in the forest. Tomahawk and scalping-knife, descending during that night, had left behind them only this work of their accomplished hatred and one subtle foot-print in the snow.

For the rest,—the world was all before them, where to choose.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Why does the author at once introduce the setting?
2. How do you explain the vision that the woman saw?
3. By what means does the author create the atmosphere of the story?

4. How does the woman escape the wild beast?
5. Read aloud the descriptive passages that occur throughout the story. Comment on their power.
6. What songs does the woman sing? How does the narration of the singing affect the reader?
7. How does the author employ suspense?
8. Where does the author make use of suggestion? Read aloud passages that have strong suggestive effect.
9. What makes the situation intensely dramatic?
10. Point out examples of poetic phrasing.
11. At what point does the author introduce the theme?
12. State the theme of the story.
13. Make a synopsis that will show the entire course of the woman's thoughts during the night.
14. What is the highest point in the woman's thoughts?
15. In what respects does the story reflect the atmosphere of colonial days?
16. How does the author make the woman appear true to the period of history concerned?
17. What had the husband done during the wife's absence?
18. Explain the second dramatic situation that the story presents.
19. How does the author relieve suspense?
20. What had happened at the home during the night?
21. What is the author's purpose in telling the story?
22. What characteristics make the story excellent?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"Circumstance" emphasizes the theme: "Temporary misfortune may be a blessing." The fact that the woman was kept all night in the forest, and that her absence led the husband to seek her, saved the whole family from death at the hands of Indians. The author sets the story in the early colonial days, when physical dangers were great, and when faith was high. Then, in two powerfully dramatic situations, the long agony of the woman, and the dilemma of the husband, the author tells the principal events that lead to the conclusion: the discovery of the ruined house, the knowledge that the family had escaped torture and death, and the solemn realization that evil often brings good in its train. "Behind a frowning Providence God hides a smiling face." To the solemnity of this theme everything contributes, the suggestions of home life, the descriptions of the somber forest, and the nature of the songs that the woman sings in what she thinks her

death agony. The entire story, like a musical composition, is unified and beautiful.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, think of a theme worthy of presentation, and invent a single incident that will illustrate such a theme. Then, with full emphasis on setting, and without stating the theme in so many words, develop the narration of the event in such a way that the reader will feel the full force of the thought.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. "Labor conquers everything." A pupil so devotes himself to work that he conquers apparently unsurmountable difficulties.
2. "Patience moves mountains." A person has such patience that he brings about an apparent miracle.
3. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." A person has such forbearance in speech that he brings happiness where it seemed impossible.
4. "Look before you leap." A person uses such forethought and care that he reaches safety from great danger.
5. "A stitch in time saves nine." A person gives what seems to be undue attention to the making of repairs, and thus becomes a means of saving life in a crisis.

THE OWL *

By Robert Louis Stevenson

Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson (1850–1894) was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. He died near Apia, Samoa, after a long series of wanderings in Europe, America, and the South Sea Islands. His life was so romantic, and his charm of personality was so reflected through his short stories, novels, essays, and poems, that he became one of the most loved of authors. He had rare skill in writing, for he drew from words and phrases their full values, and he had the ability to impart to his works a kind of fascination. He made himself, in a most individual way, a master of the short story.

Among his books are the following: *An Inland Voyage* (1878), *Travels with a Donkey* (1879), *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881), *New Arabian Nights* (1882), *Treasure Island* (1883), *A Child's Garden of Verses* (1885), *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), *Kidnapped* (1886), *The Black Arrow* (1888), *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889), *Ballads* (1891), *St. Ives* (1895–1896).

HE had no sooner quenched the light than all thought of sleep fled from him and he turned instead to the window of the room. Of the danger of his situation, repeated experiences had made him careless; it served but as a relish to those extraordinary joys which he came so far, and risked so much, to taste and to renew. Once again he had seen her and she had smiled on him; once again he was to sleep under the same roof with all that he held precious. On the impenetrable inky ground of night and forest, his eyes recreated the lamplit supper table and the speaking looks and gestures of his mistress; through the profound silence, his ears still followed the melody of her voice.

How long he had stood there, looking upon dreams and marrying the past and future, himself could not have guessed;

* From *The Ebb-Tide and Some Unfinished Stories*, by Robert Louis Stevenson, copyright, 1896, 1905, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, by Charles Scribner's Sons. Reprinted by special permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

when there arose, out of that gross blackness in which the castle, the garden, the inclosing forest and the whole face of night and nature were confounded, the sudden hooting of an owl. In the ears of one placed as he was, a republican officer sleeping under a disguise in the house of Croqueloup, no sound could be more ominous. To tell the true owl from the false that then hooted night after night in all the skirts of Brittany, was beyond the fineness of man's hearing. It might be the innocent bird, the hunter of mice; as it might be the challenging pickets of that intangible army that lay infused through all the forests of the west, that spread army men's feet like water and slew like a pervading pestilence, that broke forth of a sudden in the night with outcries and the flames of conflagration and (the blow dealt) was gone again before the morning. Not even the bravest, and this man was brave, could think upon such enemies in such a place, and not be chilled. The current of his thoughts was changed; he remembered his homeward journey of the morrow between hedge and ditch and through a land of spies; he remembered it were well he should be early asleep and early afoot again; and fully dressed as he was, he turned from the window and cast himself upon the bed.

With the change of attitude, a sleeping sentry in his memory awoke. His papers, which might at any moment prove to be his life, had been left upon a table in the dining-room corner; he could see the place, he could recall the very gesture with which he had cast them down, the very look with which Renée had welcomed and caressed him as he did so; even in the dark, in that well-known house, he thought it but a little matter to reach and to regain them; and to leave them where they were would be an act of madness. The Baron de Croqueloup was himself suspected; his life and his daughter's liberty had often hung already by a hair; none knew it better than his guest who had secretly protected them so often, who came so often to their house daring a double danger, who was equally surprised to escape murder on his journey and arrest at his return. And if such was the character of the master, what could be looked for of the servants, dwelling between moor and forest, in a land where every tree stump was an ambush,

rustic, devout, and savage, the kinsmen and compatriots of the rebels? Before the day came, before these untrusty lackeys should begin to move about the house, it was plain these papers must be recovered.

He groped his way to the door and down the lowbrowed stairs. The house of Croqueloup was ancient and of an antique stability; the solid planking sustained his tread without a rumor; and when he paused to listen, only the buzzing of his own ears rewarded his attention. So he came noiseless to the door, opened it without creak, entered the dining-room, and came of a sudden to a startled pause. He could not have told why; there was no name in his vocabulary for the mute advertisement that thus arrested him, and held him, on the threshold, in the ineffable darkness, spell-bound and straining his senses. The sounds of his own breath and heart, the very rustle of his skirt, swelled great upon his hearing; and it seemed that he grew slowly conscious of other and similar noises—horribly small, hatefully near at hand, like that we hear in fever. "I am not alone, he thought; "some one is near me, almost within touch." Nameless fear grew upon him till he could bear the strain no longer, and with the desperation of a suicide, he flung out both hands before him briskly.

In the same instant, he was clutched at arm's length with another man, and the pair thrilled together in the brute darkness of the chamber with a similar alarm.

"Who are you?" he gasped.

His unseen assailant uttered in the same breath what was either an ejaculation in a foreign tongue, or perhaps a password in some gibberish.

"Who are you? what is it?" repeated the republican.

"And I believe I know that voice," said the stranger. "So we meet at last, and in the dark," he continued, releasing his grasp. "I have long looked forward to this pleasure—how am I to call you? Count des Escherolles? or Citizen Clané?"

"You know me?" said the republican, still struggling for some shadow of that self-command which the other had regained so lightly.

"You and your business here," was the reply. "There are

few things unknown to me in Brittany, and none in the place of Croqueloup. Yes, I know your business here, Captain Clané, and I compliment you on your taste—except in names and politics."

"Aha, but I begin to place you now, too," said the man addressed as Captain Clané and the count; "and unless I am the more mistaken, you, too, have a new name since last we met. They call you the Owl, I fancy. I preferred the old."

"And I prefer the new; we clash in many things," was the reply. "But it is dull work talking in the dark; and I have a curiosity—a great curiosity—to see you."

"I have good reason to share it," said the other; "our cursed resemblance came near costing me my life."

"And yet oddly enough," replied the Owl, "it is not the resemblance, it is the difference, that troubles me." And he was to be heard in the darkness working with a tinder box.

His tone throughout the interview had been displeasing, almost hateful; but in that last speech some undercurrent of strong feeling had clanged out, had startled and alarmed his hearer. The two men were kinsmen and old school-fellows; but in those truculent days and savage places, the ties of blood and the memories of a common boyhood counted for nothing. To the renegade aristocrat, to the disguised republican officer, far from any help of his own party, in the midst of that ill-reputed forest, any man might be counted a danger; and perhaps this man above all—often-hunted and ubiquitous bearer of royalist despatches, the famed spy, he whose nocturnal activity and diurnal disappearance had earned him years ago the nickname of the Owl. It is certain that he thought so; at that inscrutable inflexion of his cousin's voice, his hand passed swiftly and fiercely to his pistol; and it was in a painful anxiety that he waited the lighting of the lamp. The Owl was deft—he had learned and practised in his wandering career inscrutable dexterities—and the flame had scarce caught before he faced the count and looked him over.

"You can take your hand out of your pocket," he observed. "I will not hurt you. I give you my word of honor, if you remember what that means."

The count flushed hotly and crossed his hands upon his bosom.

"There is a mirror here," said the Owl. "We shall see better in the glass. We can compare better. If you will be so good?" And he led the way, lamp in hand, to the far end of the apartment.

They made a strange pair. The count was disguised indeed, but his disguise was comely; and though he wore civilian clothes, he carried them off like a soldier and a dandy. Clean-shaven, close-cropped and brown-necked, he stood squaring his shoulders and poising his head, all the more haughty for his recent terror and present peril. The appearance of the Owl, on the other hand, was sylvan and ominous like his nickname. He was dressed like a peasant, with the great hat, the wide breeches and the wooden shoes; his clothes were stained with the mire of the wayside and torn by the briars of the forest; his hair streamed on his shoulders long as a woman's. He held the lamp high, and himself stooped below it, bending forward and studying his cousin with what seemed a passionate intensity of interest; his mouth was set, his hand trembled, and the light shook in his grasp, and the shadows on the faces wavered and changed.

The nature of his scrutiny, and the emotion that plainly lay behind and prompted it, escaped the deepest penetration of the Count Clané des Escherolles; but he resented, he was troubled by it; the blood came in his face, as it might into a maiden's; and he turned upon his heel.

"I can see no great resemblance," said he.

"Nor I so great a difference," said the Owl.

Both were right; under the trenchant opposition of dress and demeanor, it was certainly possible to discriminate what is called a family likeness, one of those likenesses that come and go, that now strikes us with sudden wonder and that anon we stare and study for in vain. The height, the set of the figure, and certain movements familiar to both were even identical. Each besides had the same prominent chin and nose, the latter finely chiselled and of a very arrogant design; each the same dark eyes sloping somewhat downward towards each

other like the wing of a bird in flight. It was conceivable they might, upon an occasion, be confused, apart; when they were seen together, in those incongruous habits and under the influence of sentiments so different, the likeness was difficult to identify.

The count continued to walk away from the mirror towards the door, scarce with a set purpose; only to put space between himself and one who had grown bothersome.

"M. le comte Clané des Escherolles," said the Owl, slightly raising his voice. "I direct your attention to the fact that I am about to sup. I have covered eight leagues since I broke my fast."

The count turned, and observed for the first time that the tablecloth had been laid again since he retired and spread with meat and wine. The sight gave a him a pang; Ariane must have known of it and had not told him; and the sense of exclusion rankled in him deep.

"Ah! you were expected!" he said.

"Even so, my cousin," replied the Owl, taking his place. "Will you join me?"

"I thank you. I have supped already," said the count.

The Owl looked up at him with a sudden expression that was at once menacing and imperious. "And yet I will ask you to sit down with me," he said.

There was a moment's hesitation; but it was plainly the better part to temporise, and the count drew in a chair and took a seat; at the same time he leaned his elbow on the table and his head upon his hand, so as to conceal some portion of his face.

The Owl took off his great hat, muttered a prayer and covered himself.

"You were not so devout of old," observed the count.

"A fashion," returned the other. "It is a fashion in our camp, and a gentleman must always be in the mode. But it is quite harmless and not catching."

He took a deep draught of wine and began to eat with a business-like voracity; it seemed he had forgot the presence of

his kinsman, when he suddenly pointed at him with his knife.

"To think that I once loved that man!" said he.

The count started. "Chevalier," said he, "I am here at your desire. I have to request you to refrain from sneering."

"You are not a great reader of the heart: there was no sneer in that," replied the Owl. "But there was much bitterness; because it is quite true that I once loved you. My God, and admired him, too!" he added.

"And now here you are, afraid to be alone with me!"

"I am not easily frightened," said the count, "or I should not be here."

"Yet I should be vastly concerned to meet you in the streets of your garrison, and I am often there—oftener than you dream for," said the Owl. "Suppose we did—for the sake of conversation—what would you do?"

The count flushed and paled. "My duty," he replied.

"It is very well said. But to do it is another thing," said the other. "Denys, do you love me still? Do you think that I still love you?"

"I am in no humor for conundrums," said the count.

"Am I to congratulate you, then? This love affair has been a long while nursing; is it ripe? I am curious—I have a great interest in your love affair."

"And I deny your right to be informed," said the other.

"Well, I shall ask Aimée," said the Owl.

The count ground his teeth. "I am not very sure, M. de Quimpoli," said he, "but I believe you seek to thrust on me a quarrel."

"Far from that," replied the Owl. "I am about to suggest to you the propriety of your immediate departure from this house."

"Now? In the dark? I am very much obliged to you."

"You may very well be, for the advice is excellent," said the Owl.

"And why do you give it me?" asked the count. "You do not love me; you have had ado to keep your hatred covered."

"No, but I love Aimée," replied the other.

"Ah, and that is what has been wrong with you all night!"

"That is what has been wrong with me all night," returned the Owl.

"And for the same reason I refuse it, then!" said the count, rising. "I shall sleep here, as I was invited, under the banner of Aimée's father. And with that I wish you a good evening."

[After he had gone from the room, the Owl sat a while motionless; then filled his glass and drank. His face was dark and troubled.

And with that, thrilling with irritation, he left the room, mounted the stair, and once more threw himself in the dark upon his bed, this time certainly not to sleep. Rather indeed he passed what then remained of darkness in perfectly impotent endeavors to judge the character of his cousin, the motive with which he had advised him, and the question of his own folly or wisdom in questioning that advice.]

The cousin sat but a little while at the table. He rose and set forth in turn in the dark house, came to a door, and knocked upon it in a particular manner.

"Who is there?" said a voice from within.

"It is I, Alain," he replied. "I must speak with you."

A moment after the door was opened, and a girl in her nightdress and roughly muffled in a cloak, appeared before him. She was in no way discomposed; in that time and house nocturnal summonses were things of course.

"Ariane," said the young man, "I have to put a question to you which it is very needful you shall answer truthfully. Is it as I suppose, or am I deceiving myself? Do you love—" he paused a little at the name—"Monsieur des Escherolles?"

She replied with perfect simplicity, "I do."

"It is a very bad business," said he. "There is no sense in it. It will end, it must end, in misery for you both."

"I am afraid of it," said Ariane.

"And yet you go on—with your eyes open you go on?" asked the Owl.

"With my eyes open, Alain," said the girl.

"Well! Then tell me how to save him. I cannot. I have warned the man and he will not believe me. This house is no place for him to-night."

"Why, what do you mean? To-night? What is there to-night?"

"I do not know. I do not speak from certainty, but I believe the Good Apostle will be here to-morrow. As I came in to-night, the Owls were very lively in the forest. Trust me, I know their voices. It was some one closing in on Croqueloup, and you will have company to breakfast."

"It is in the teeth of all my information," said Ariane. "Jean-Baptiste is not gone from here six hours; he told a different story. You must be wrong. He has never before gone without warning us."

"What I fear is something sudden," said the Owl. "As I came by Letoits St. Antoine, I heard shots fired. Some of ours had been taken. It was some one considerable, for the hounds cheered consumedly. Half a league farther on and I began to suspect I was on the outskirts of a movement. The Owls began to cry; and on the top of the moor beyond the sandy stones, I am sure I saw men moving."

The girl was very pale. "Alain," she said, "this is only guess-work."

"It is more than guess-work, it is instinct. I have led this damned life so long that I feel things in my bones—feel them before they happen, as the rheumatism comes before the rain."

She shook her head. "But my information is explicit," said she. "It outweighs all instincts. Food was prepared for them eight leagues to the westward; there can nothing have occurred to change a settled plan. And besides—if there were any hope in it! But to send him off in the dark along that road, it is but a forlorn hope at the best; it is almost certain death, you know it, you cannot deny it—"

"It is a great risk," said Alain. "I can never deny that. And yet if I were in your place, he should not stay here for one moment. I cannot prove to you that I am right, and yet I know it. I *know* it, Ariane! Keep him here and to-morrow,

by the break of day, you will see him in the hands of the Good Apostle."

She shuddered in spite of herself, for the leader named was one of the most savage in that most savage war. "I am sure you mean right, I will always trust you, Alain."

(*Stevenson died before he could complete the story.*)

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Why does the author begin the story with a pronoun that has no immediate antecedent?
2. What does the first sentence indicate concerning the story that is to follow?
3. To what events does the first paragraph allude?
4. What does the second paragraph reveal concerning (a) period of history, (b) setting, and (c) plot?
5. How does the second paragraph foreshadow the leading events of the story?
6. What further revelations of plot does the third paragraph make?
7. To what emotions does the fourth paragraph appeal?
8. What is the character of the Count?
9. What is the character of the man called "The Owl"?
10. Explain the resemblance between the Count and The Owl.
11. Why are the two men antagonistic?
12. Should the Count have left the castle, as The Owl advised him to do?
13. Who are "The Owls"?
14. Who is "The Good Apostle"?
15. Is The Owl worthy of trust?
16. Does The Owl really wish to aid Ariane? to save the Count?
17. Whom does Stevenson intend to be the central figure of the story?
18. Why is it evident that Stevenson intended to make much use of the resemblance between the Count and The Owl?

HOW TO WRITE A CONCLUSION FOR THE STORY

"The Owl" is a romantic story of love, adventure, and war, which Stevenson did not live to complete. In May, 1893, a few months before his death, he wrote to his friend, Sir Sidney Colvin, saying that he was working on a short story to be called "The Owl." In his letter he said that he intended "The Owl" to end "reasonably well." In the same letter he said: "'The Owl' only ends well in so far as some

lovers come together, and nobody is killed at the moment, but you know they are all doomed."

The scene of "The Owl" is a lonely castle in a forest on the Breton coast of France. The time is that of the French Revolution. The principal characters, who represent different sides in the conflict, are all members of a noble family, while the villain of the story is a ferocious revolutionary leader called "The Good Apostle." The plot centers on the fact that a Count in the service of the Revolution loves the daughter of a royalist and dares to enter the castle in which she lives. Stevenson suggests that the Count's cousin, a royalist spy, a man who bears close resemblance to him, is a rival lover. The first chapter suggests that a band of savage men known as "The Owls," presumably revolutionists, are closing about the castle, thereby threatening danger to all of noble blood. The plot is somewhat reminiscent of the plots of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*, and Mark Twain's "Harley-Grangerford Feud," in *Huckleberry Finn*, in all of which love between people who might be antagonistic brings serious complications to themselves and to others.

How did Stevenson intend to end the story? No one knows. Does the ardent lover escape safely from the castle and from all threatening dangers? Does he win his sweetheart? Does The Owl aid him for her sake? Does he aid The Owl? Do The Owls capture the castle? Does the resemblance between the Count and The Owl bring serious confusion? Are both men obliged to risk everything in order to save the woman whom each one loves? What stirring events take place with the coming of morning? No one can answer these questions satisfactorily, but the story is so interesting that it stimulates the reader to try to answer them.

In the fragment that he completed, Stevenson set forward all the necessary material, the setting, the characters, the action, and the atmosphere. The reader of the story will find pleasure in trying to continue in the romantic vein, using quick dialogue, narrating stirring events, and throwing strong illumination on character. Chapter II, one might suppose, would be of nearly the same length as Chapter I. The plot of Chapter II would, without doubt, make much use of the resemblance between the Count and The Owl. In this respect, as well as in that of having its setting in the period of the French Revolution, the plot would resemble that of Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*, in which the resemblance between Sidney Carton and Charles Darnay results in the saving of Charles Darnay and Lucie Manette, whom both men loved, and the self-sacrifice of Sidney Carton. Perhaps Stevenson

intended to make use of the same plot. In that case, The Owl might be expected to save the Count and Ariane at the cost of his own life.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CONCLUSIONS

1. The Owls capture the castle and make all its people prisoners. At the cost of his own life, for the sake of his love for Ariane, and through his resemblance to the Count, The Owl saves Ariane and her lover.
2. The Owls capture the castle. They at once order the execution of the royalist spy. Through his resemblance to The Owl, the Count, with the help of Ariane, manages to save him.
3. The Owls draw near the castle. Just as they are about to capture it, the royalist spy, making daring use of the resemblance between himself and the Count, succeeds in diverting them from their purpose, and then leads the Count and Ariane to safety.
4. The Owls draw near the castle. The Owl, assuming a false name, sends word that a royalist spy is in the castle. He directs the fierce revolutionists to the Count. Deceived by the resemblance of the two men, the revolutionists are about to execute the Count. At the pleading of Ariane, The Owl exposes himself to all the danger and saves his rival.
5. The Owl disguises himself as the Count and goes to the revolutionary leaders, learns their plans, and is about to lead them to destruction, when the Count, released by Ariane from bondage, thwarts his plans.

THE LADY OR THE TIGER?*

By Frank R. Stockton

Frank R. Stockton (Frank Richard Stockton, 1834–1902) was born in Philadelphia. Having completed the equivalent of a modern high school course of study, he became a wood-engraver, and later a writer for newspapers and magazines. For several years he was assistant editor of *St. Nicholas*. Beginning in 1880 he devoted himself to independent authorship. He delighted a wide circle of readers by his gift for humorous and fantastic writing. Among his books are the following: *Rudder Grange* (1879), *The Casting Away of Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine* (1886), *The Bee Man of Orm* (1887), *The Adventures of Captain Horn* (1895), *Mrs. Cliff's Yacht* (1896), *The Great Stone of Sardis* (1898).

IN the very olden time, there lived a semi-barbaric king, whose ideas, though somewhat polished and sharpened by the progressiveness of distant Latin neighbors, were still large, florid, and untrammelled, as became the half of him which was barbaric. He was a man of exuberant fancy, and, withal, of an authority so irresistible that, at his will, he turned his varied fancies into facts. He was greatly given to self-communing, and when he and himself agreed upon anything, the thing was done. When every member of his domestic and political systems moved smoothly in its appointed course, his nature was bland and genial; but whenever there was a little hitch, and some of his orbs got out of their orbits, he was blander and more genial still, for nothing pleased him so much as to make the crooked straight, and crush down uneven places.

Among the borrowed notions by which his barbarism had

* From *The Lady or the Tiger?* by Frank R. Stockton. Copyright, 1886, by Charles Scribner's Sons. Copyright, 1914, by Marie Louise and Frances A. Stockton. Reprinted by special permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

become semified was that of the public arena, in which, by exhibitions of manly and beastly valor, the minds of his subjects were refined and cultured.

But even here the exuberant and barbaric fancy asserted itself. The arena of the king was built, not to give the people an opportunity of hearing the rhapsodies of dying gladiators, nor to enable them to view the inevitable conclusion of a conflict between religious opinions and hungry jaws, but for purposes far better adapted to widen and develop the mental energies of the people. This vast amphitheatre, with its encircling galleries, its mysterious vaults, and its unseen passages, was an agent of poetic justice, in which crime was punished, or virtue rewarded, by the decrees of an impartial and incorruptible chance.

When a subject was accused of a crime of sufficient importance to interest the king, public notice was given that on an appointed day the fate of the accused person would be decided in the king's arena—a structure which well deserved its name; for, although its form and plan were borrowed from afar, its purpose emanated solely from the brain of this man, who, every barleycorn a king, knew no tradition to which he owed more allegiance than pleased his fancy, and who ingrafted on every adopted form of human thought and action the rich growth of his barbaric idealism.

When all the people had assembled in the galleries, and the king, surrounded by his court, sat high up on his throne of royal state on one side of the arena, he gave a signal, a door beneath him opened, and the accused subject stepped out into the amphitheatre. Directly opposite him, on the other side of the enclosed space, were two doors, exactly alike and side by side. It was the duty and the privilege of the person on trial to walk directly to these doors and open one of them. He could open either door he pleased. He was subject to no guidance or influence but that of the aforementioned impartial and incorruptible chance. If he opened the one, there came out of it a hungry tiger, the fiercest and most cruel that could be procured, which immediately sprang upon him, and tore him to pieces, as a punishment for his guilt. The

moment that the case of the criminal was thus decided, doleful iron bells were clanged, great wails went up from the hired mourners posted on the outer rim of the arena, and the vast audience, with bowed heads and downcast hearts, wended slowly their homeward way, mourning greatly that one so young and fair, or so old and respected, should have merited so dire a fate.

But if the accused person opened the other door, there came forth from it a lady, the most suitable to his years and station that his Majesty could select among his fair subjects; and to this lady he was immediately married, as a reward of his innocence. It mattered not that he might already possess a wife and family, or that his affections might be engaged upon an object of his own selection. The king allowed no such subordinate arrangements to interfere with his great scheme of retribution and reward. The exercises, as in the other instance, took place immediately, and in the arena. Another door opened beneath the king, and a priest, followed by a band of choristers, and dancing maidens blowing joyous airs on golden horns and treading an epithalamic measure, advanced to where the pair stood side by side, and the wedding was promptly and cheerily solemnized. Then the gay brass bells rang forth their merry peals, the people shouted glad hurrahs, and the innocent man, preceded by children strewing flowers on his path, led his bride to his home.

This was the king's semi-barbaric method of administering justice. Its perfect fairness is obvious. The criminal could not know out of which door would come the lady. He opened either he pleased, without having the slightest idea whether, in the next instant, he was to be devoured or married. On some occasions the tiger came out of one door, and on some out of the other. The decisions of this tribunal were not only fair —they were positively determinate. The accused person was instantly punished if he found himself guilty, and if innocent he was rewarded on the spot, whether he liked it or not. There was no escape from the judgments of the king's arena.

The institution was a very popular one. When the people gathered together on one of the great trial days, they never

knew whether they were to witness a bloody slaughter or a hilarious wedding. This element of uncertainty lent an interest to the occasion which it could not otherwise have attained. Thus the masses were entertained and pleased, and the thinking part of the community could bring no charge of unfairness against this plan; for did not the accused person have the whole matter in his own hands?

This semi-barbaric king had a daughter as blooming as his most florid fancies, and with a soul as fervent and imperious as his own. As is usual in such cases, she was the apple of his eye, and was loved by him above all humanity. Among his courtiers was a young man of that fineness of blood and lowness of station common to the conventional heroes of romance who love royal maidens. This royal maiden was well satisfied with her lover, for he was handsome and brave to a degree unsurpassed in all this kingdom, and she loved him with an ardor that had enough of barbarism in it to make it exceedingly warm and strong. This love affair moved on happily for many months, until, one day, the king happened to discover its existence. He did not hesitate nor waver in regard to his duty in the premises. The youth was immediately cast into prison, and a day was appointed for his trial in the king's arena. This, of course, was an especially important occasion, and his Majesty, as well as all the people, was greatly interested in the workings and development of his trial. Never before had such a case occurred—never before had a subject dared to love the daughter of a king. In after years such things became commonplace enough, but then they were, in no slight degree, novel and startling.

The tiger cages of the kingdom were searched for the most savage and relentless beasts, from which the fiercest monster might be selected for the arena, and the ranks of maiden youth and beauty throughout the land were carefully surveyed by competent judges, in order that the young man might have a fitting bride in case fate did not determine for him a different destiny. Of course, everybody knew that the deed with which the accused was charged had been done. He had loved the princess, and neither he, she, nor any one else

thought of denying the fact. But the king would not think of allowing any fact of this kind to interfere with the workings of the tribunal, in which he took such great delight and satisfaction. No matter how the affair turned out, the youth would be disposed of, and the king would take an æsthetic pleasure in watching the course of events which would determine whether or not the young man had done wrong in allowing himself to love the princess.

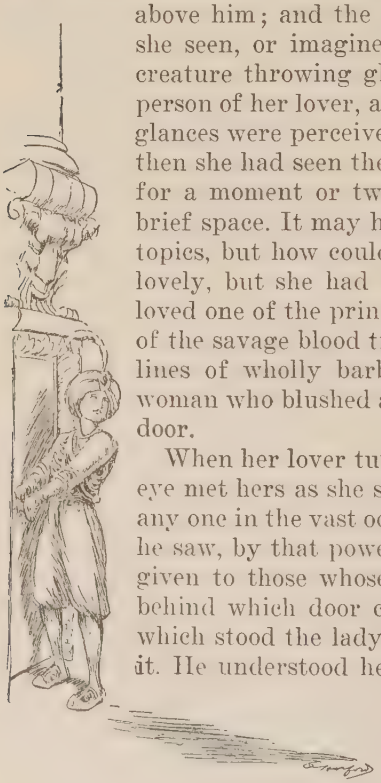
The appointed day arrived. From far and near the people gathered, and thronged the great galleries of the arena, while crowds, unable to gain admittance, massed themselves against its outside walls. The king and his court were in their places, opposite the twin doors—those fateful portals, so terrible in their similarity!

All was ready. The signal was given. A door beneath the royal party opened, and the lover of the princess walked into the arena. Tall, beautiful, fair, his appearance was greeted with a low hum of admiration and anxiety. Half the audience had not known so grand a youth had lived among them. No wonder the princess loved him! What a terrible thing for him to be there!

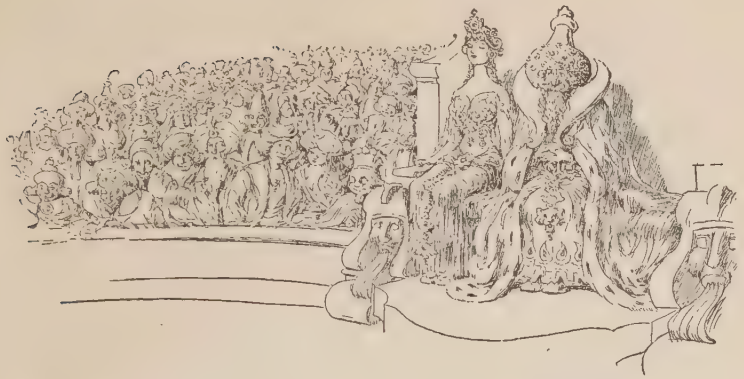
As the youth advanced into the arena, he turned, as the custom was, to bow to the king. But he did not think at all of that royal personage; his eyes were fixed upon the princess, who sat to the right of her father. Had it not been for the moiety of barbarism in her nature, it is probable that lady would not have been there. But her intense and fervid soul would not allow her to be absent on an occasion in which she was so terribly interested. From the moment that the decree had gone forth that her lover should decide his fate in the king's arena, she had thought of nothing, night or day, but this great event and the various subjects connected with it. Possessed of more power, influence, and force of character than any one who had ever before been interested in such a case, she had done what no other person had done—she had possessed herself of the secret of the doors. She knew in which of the two rooms behind those doors stood the cage of the tiger, with its open front, and in which waited the

lady. Through these thick doors, heavily curtained with skins on the inside, it was impossible that any noise or suggestion should come from within to the person who should approach to raise the latch of one of them. But gold, and the power of a woman's will, had brought the secret to the princess.

Not only did she know in which room stood the lady, ready to emerge, all blushing and radiant, should her door be opened, but she knew who the lady was. It was one of the fairest and loveliest of the damsels of the court who had been selected as the reward of the accused youth, should he be proved innocent of the crime of aspiring to one so far above him; and the princess hated her. Often had she seen, or imagined that she had seen, this fair creature throwing glances of admiration upon the person of her lover, and sometimes she thought these glances were perceived and even returned. Now and then she had seen them talking together. It was but for a moment or two, but much can be said in a brief space. It may have been on most unimportant topics, but how could she know that? The girl was lovely, but she had dared to raise her eyes to the loved one of the princess, and, with all the intensity of the savage blood transmitted to her through long lines of wholly barbaric ancestors, she hated the woman who blushed and trembled behind that silent door.



When her lover turned and looked at her, and his eye met hers as she sat there paler and whiter than any one in the vast ocean of anxious faces about her, he saw, by that power of quick perception which is given to those whose souls are one, that she knew behind which door crouched the tiger, and behind which stood the lady. He had expected her to know it. He understood her nature, and his soul was assured that she would never rest until she had made plain to herself this thing, hidden to all other lookers-on, even



to the king. The only hope for the youth in which there was any element of certainty was based upon the success of the princess in discovering this mystery, and the moment he looked upon her, he saw she had succeeded.

Then it was that his quick and anxious glance asked the question, "Which?" It was as plain to her as if he shouted it from where he stood. There was not an instant to be lost. The question was asked in a flash; it must be answered in another.

Her right arm lay on the cushioned parapet before her. She raised her hand, and made a slight, quick movement toward the right. No one but her lover saw her. Every eye but his was fixed on the man in the arena.

He turned, and with a firm and rapid step he walked across the empty space. Every heart stopped beating, every breath was held, every eye was fixed immovably upon that man. Without the slightest hesitation, he went to the door on the right, and opened it.

Now, the point of the story is this: Did the tiger come out of that door, or did the lady?

The more we reflect upon this question, the harder it is to answer. It involves a study of the human heart which leads us through devious mazes of passion, out of which it is difficult to find our way. Think of it, fair reader, not as if the decision of the question depended upon yourself, but upon

that hot-blooded, semi-barbaric princess, her soul at a white heat beneath the combined fires of despair and jealousy. She had lost him, but who should have him?

How often, in her waking hours and in her dreams, had she started in wild horror and covered her face with her hands as she thought of her lover opening the door on the other side of which waited the cruel fangs of the tiger!

But how much oftener had she seen him at the other door! How in her grievous reveries had she gnashed her teeth and torn her hair when she saw his start of rapturous delight as he opened the door of the lady! How her soul had burned in agony when she had seen him rush to meet that woman, with her flushing cheek and sparkling eye of triumph; when she had seen him lead her forth, his whole frame kindled with the joy of recovered life; when she had heard the glad shouts from the multitude, and the wild ringing of the happy bells; when she had seen the priest, with his joyous followers, advance to the couple, and make them man and wife before her very eyes; and when she had seen them walk away together upon their path of flowers, followed by the tremendous shouts of the hilarious multitude, in which her one despairing shriek was lost and drowned!

Would it not be better for him to die at once, and go to wait for her in the blessed regions of semi-barbaric futurity?

And yet, that awful tiger, those shrieks, that blood!

Her decision had been indicated in an instant, but it had been made after days and nights of anguished deliberation. She had known she would be asked, she had decided what she would answer, and, without the slightest hesitation, she had moved her hand to the right.

The question of her decision is one not to be lightly considered, and it is not for me to presume to set up myself as the one person able to answer it. So I leave it with all of you: Which came out of the opened door—the lady or the tiger?

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What is the spirit of the first paragraph?
2. Point out humorous plays upon words.

3. What events in the story depend upon the character of the King?
4. In what respects is the story humorous?
5. What is the character of the Princess? To what extent is she barbaric?
6. What does the author do to make it difficult for the reader to raise objections as to the probability of the story?
7. What does the author do to make it difficult for the reader to solve the problem that the story presents?
8. In what respects does the story "involve a study of the human heart"?
9. Which came out of the opened door—the Lady or the Tiger?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"The Lady or the Tiger?" presents a problem difficult to solve, and leaves the solution to the reader. That solution depends upon the reader's estimate of the character of the Princess. Was the barbaric lady more likely to be moved by jealous hate or by unselfish love? Whatever the answer is, it is certain that the author prepared most carefully for the presentation of the problem. He laid down the premises for the story, removed the possibility of objections at various points, dwelt fully upon the character of the King and that of the Princess, and then set the question, and laid emphasis on its difficulty.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, set a problem whose answer will depend upon a close analysis of character. Present all facts that will explain and emphasize the situation. Then leave the solution to the reader.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. A young man, accompanied by his mother and his sister, both of whom he loves dearly, goes in a canoe far out on a lake. The canoe overturns. He can save but one person. Which one?
2. A man driving an automobile at high speed comes upon his own child in the middle of the road. He cannot stop, and he cannot avoid killing his child unless he turns to one side. If he turns to either side he will kill several people. What does he do?
3. A young man sees his sister, who is scarcely more than a child, attacked by a savage dog at the very moment when a girl of the same age falls into a near-by stream and is likely to drown. Does the young man help his sister, or does he save the drowning girl?
4. A man sees his mother and his little daughter endangered by an

approaching railroad train. He has time to reach but one. Which one does he save?

5. Three people, two of whom are brothers, are climbing on a high mountain. Two of them slip and are about to fall from a steep precipice and be dashed to death. One is caught by one of the brothers and held in a position of great danger. At that instant the other brother, who is about to fall, cries for help. Does the first brother release his hold on the one whom he has caught, or does he allow his brother to fall?

MADEMOISELLE *

By Elisabeth Finley-Thomas

Elisabeth Finley-Thomas was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, of New England parents. She is a descendant of John Davenport, founder of the colony of New Haven, Connecticut, and protector of the Regicide Judges of Charles I. Mrs. Thomas was educated in Europe, in Paris, Dresden, Florence, and Madrid. Having inherited from her father a love of art, she studied painting in the Julian Academy in Paris, and later with well-known artists. She became so successful as a painter of portraits that her work was exhibited at the Society of American Artists, the National Academy of Design, the Paris Salon, and elsewhere. Mrs. Thomas is the author of many poems, of various articles on art and the drama, and of numerous short stories. Among her works are the following: *Tales of Palm Beach and Florida* (1919); three novels, *Rendezvous* (1926), *Empty Shrines* (1927), and *Nevertheless the Duke* (1929); and many short stories, among which are "The Last Pew," "Children of Hate," "The Valley of Silence," "Treasures on Earth," "Erda," and "The Defining Incident."

MY first meeting with Mademoiselle occurred one morning in my Cousin Clorinda's converted—or perverted—farm-house at Westbury.

The Federal Income Tax Bureau places a high valuation on Clorinda, but to me she represents solely the confusions, the discomforts and imaginary obligations attendant upon riches, unadministered by common sense.

Consequently I find difficulty in cherishing Clorinda with the ardor which she demands of me in my rôle of bachelor relative. For years, in fact until my "Psychology of Napoleon Bonaparte" attracted the volatile attention of a fashionable book reviewer, she quite forgot or ignored those

* From *The Century Magazine.* Reprinted by special permission of Elisabeth Finley-Thomas.

"ties of nature" celebrated in the old hymn. As for the "habits of affection" mentioned by the same authority, I did not find Clorinda habit-forming in that direction when she finally "took me up" with capricious violence.

Occasionally, however, I invertebrately succumb to a fifteenth telephone call transmitted by her various butlers, footmen, and secretaries, and let myself in for a week-end of a homesickness that brings me back to New York by an early Sunday evening train. My desire for flight on these occasions is due to my inability to stand the grinding routine of over-solvency; Clorinda is completely caught in the machinery, and her guests become involved with her.

There is of course a mockery of freedom, a decalcomania of British customs, in Clorinda's hospitality. You are entirely neglected. Your hostess neither meets you at the station, greets you upon arrival, nor presents you to other visitors. "You know everybody, of course," is the nearest approach to a life-belt that I have ever known her to throw to a foundering outsider. Under this system individuality should perhaps expand. That mine fails to respond is, in part, due to the fact that I am hampered by the wrong kind of personal luggage in the way of unfashionable idiosyncrasies. I am archaic. I like eating breakfast in a dining-room, and I am a hopelessly early riser. Clorinda's Anglophobia has not yet instituted the buffet of cold roasts and chafing-dishes, and one is still condemned to the meager provisions of the breakfast-tray. A single rose in a glass vase, of a tint to match the china, in no way compensates me. I resent the two triangular pieces of thin toast, the small pot of coffee, and the pallidly refined egg, sole indiscretion, one must opine, of a virgin hen.

On the morning of my meeting with Mademoiselle, I had awakened earlier than usual with a criminal sense of violating by this first matutinal act the fastidious etiquette of the bedchamber. The hands of the clock confirmed my heinous vulgarity. Rolling over I made an effort to doze modishly. It was useless. I determined to dress without waiting for the valet to bring me, an hour later, my impeccably "boned"

boots. Presently I was stealing, like a second-story man, down the stairway, mindful that my heels should not tap a reveille on the polished wood of the landings. I would find a corner somewhere, I reflected, and a book that I could read. My night-table had offered me the fashion magazines, "Eat and Grow Thin," "The Tabooed Duchess"; and I am still of the decreasing minority that enjoys Addison.

It occurred to me also that I would prevail upon some compliant minion to serve me my breakfast downstairs. But my defiance of the conventions had forfeited the respect of the attendants. They made no compromises in my favor.

In the library the vacuum-cleaner almost caught my heels, as I seized a book at random from shelves regularly stocked like a mouth too full of teeth; and in the living-room the carpet-sweeper threatened equally to involve me. I fled to the terrace, but the cold swish of a garden-hose inundated the stonework and incidentally my boots. Cleanliness can be as objectionable as godliness.

"Damn Clorinda." I felt in my pocket for a time-table.

"If monsieur fears the humidity—" The voice came from the sun-porch that gave upon the terrace. In the doorway stood the quaint figure of Mademoiselle, the middle-aged French governess whom I had often noticed nervously shepherding Clorinda's little black sheep about the house and garden. To my surprise she seemed to be trembling with excitement. The jet beads that hung over the plain alpaca frock which fitted her small round figure with a certain coquetry heaved and clicked as her breath quickened.

Now although I am elderly and may have begun to resemble Mr. Pickwick, my senility has not yet reached the point where I conceive of myself as representing adventure. Mademoiselle's emotion intrigued me. Her deprecating gesture of welcome invited toward a table where the three spoiled unhopefuls of my cousin sat breakfasting picturesquely after the manner of fashionable child life as delineated in "House and Terrace" and "Home and Gardens." The trellised walls, the green-painted furniture, the pale-blue smocks of the children, the yellow oranges and

the gaily decorated plates, conformed to the convention established by modern illustrators. The scene was not without attraction.

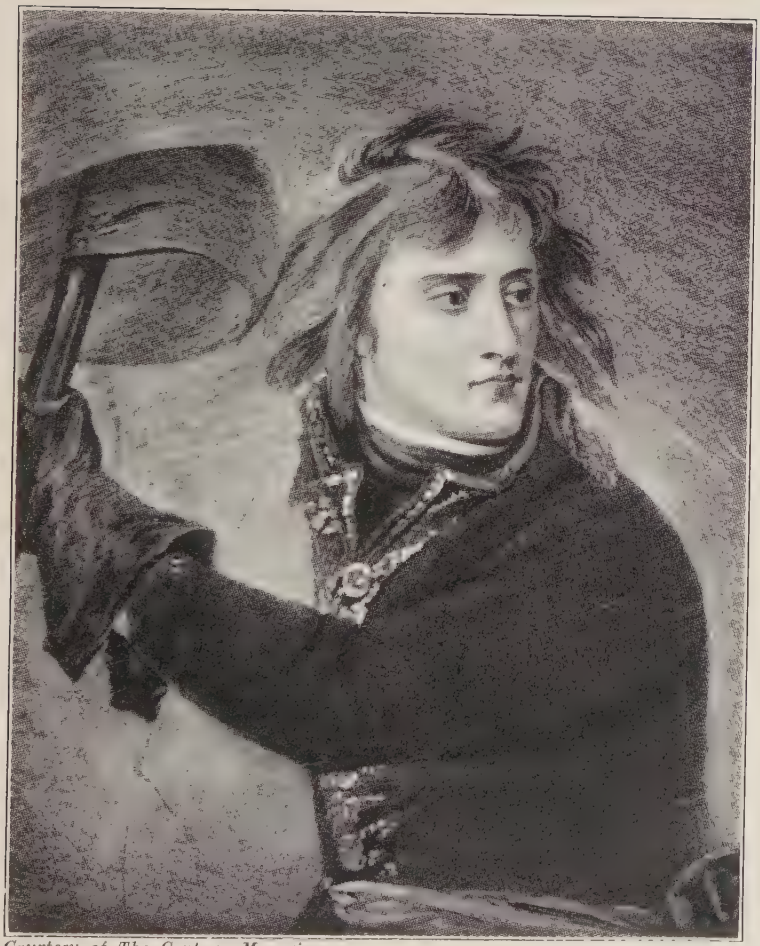
"I really do need shelter," I said, laughing and looking down at my bespattered morning-suit, as Mademoiselle drew a chair toward the table.

"I should scarcely have ventured—" she was saying, "but the desire, knowing that monsieur was the biographer of the Emperor! It is that I also pass my time in the company of the great men. Salute *monsieur votre cousin, mes petits,*" she fussily admonished her charges.

The "House and Terrace" youngsters came out of their picture long enough to courtesy-bob with sulky reluctance. Having ordered from a striped-bellied footman a he-man's breakfast of ham and eggs, to be vulgarly fried, I observed Mademoiselle as she fumblingly readjusted the bib about the neck of Clorinda's youngest. She was evidently nearing sixty, yet there was about her that air of blighted youth which prolonged innocence often gives to nuns and old maids. Winter must have followed close on spring. As she resumed her seat, her round blue eyes looked out wistfully at me from under the frizzly thatch of a transformation drawn to a tight knot on the top of her head, and from above the full contour of her smooth cheeks the soft tremulous lips made her resemble, in a sort of futile femininity, the ineffectual beauties of the Greuze portraits. Mademoiselle was but too evidently a child lost in its sixth decade.

"Yes, monsieur," she went on with the released volubility of people condemned to habitual silence, "in my solitude I frequent only the great, and above all Napoleon. When one is brought up in certain traditions, the very names are magic: Marengo, Sebastopol, Jena." Her thin voice took on a martial tone; her small chest expanded.

"Madame your cousin made me a present of your noble work, a *chef d'œuvre,* monsieur. I was glad that you consider Josephine insufficient. She was not *à la hauteur,* monsieur. Nor yet did she know how to efface herself. I have always felt that I could have understood the Emperor. Figure



Courtesy of The Century Magazine.

"'*En avant,*' I hear him say."

to yourself that I possess a great treasure, an inkstand, monsieur, used by myself, which he presented to one of his generals, an ancestor of mine. *Oui, monsieur.* And it has been my talisman; from it I draw courage. Ah, yes, even little lives need courage. '*En avant,*' I hear him say, '*quarante siècles nous regardent.*' And I believe it, monsieur, that the centuries watch us!"

She was transformed, glowing. She did not notice that Fifine, evidently fearless of the disapprobation of the centuries and unappreciative of Napoleon, had stuck out her tongue.

"I even offer to the children at times as a recompense when they have learned well the fables of La Fontaine that they may write from my inkstand."

"I hate Napoleon," remarked Fifine succinctly.

Mademoiselle's momentary flush blanched under the insult to her hero.

"Go to your room at once, my child, and copy the first four tenses of the verb *devoir.*"

"I'll jolly well tell mother we're fed up on Napoleon," muttered Fifine as she passed my chair. "Napoleon, Châteaubriand, Lamartine, the whole bunch!"

I hastily covered these remarks of the retreating Fifine by the suggestion that even Napoleon and the poets must be an insufficient antidote for the care of a lot of spoiled children and its attendant monotony.

"Ah, monsieur," replied Mademoiselle, "you understand! It is not that I do not love children, but—my little Jack, take your fingers from your bread and milk, *à bas les petites pattes!*—but I am forbidden to correct them, to form them. *Mon Dieu!* there must be monotony, even in the life of the married woman, but it is the monotony of the affections. This is that thing infinitely more profound, *l'ennui.* But I abuse the patience of monsieur."

"Perhaps you suffer above all the nostalgia of your Paris," I hazarded sympathetically.

"How you have reason—but conditions—the franc—my economies placed badly with a brother-in-law! For many

years to come I shall see myself forced to remain in a strange land."

"You will be drawn back in the end. No need for Parisians to throw sous in the fountain of the Place de la Concorde." I tried to speak lightly.

"You think so?" There was a note of yearning in her tone.

"I am so sure that I hereby give you rendezvous at Voisin's any day you mention."

Her blush had the wild rose tint of a young girl's. She constricted her smile to the limits of formal propriety; then she became confidential again. It was evident that she was as ravenous for talk as a long-starved man before his first dish of food.

"You jest, monsieur. But figure to yourself that once I really *did* dine *au restaurant.*"

I looked at her inquiringly, awaiting the recital of the incident.

"Yes, it was with my brother-in-law. I was returning from a post in England. He and my sister met me at the Gare du Nord. The boat-train was late. We lived far in the Quarter of St.-Sulpice. So he said, '*Allons, mes petites, rigolons* for once' (he had the character very gay, Alphonse!); 'let us eat at the café opposite.' It was a dinner at fixed price. We had an excellent *petit vin de Bordeaux* and a black coffee as well as a *pousse café*. The whole thing was done quite *en prince*. I remember it was very cold crossing the bridge afterward on the *impériale.*"

Half the joy of remembering is remembering together. I lied, in the effort to create good fellowship. "I recall that restaurant very well," I said. This lonely little creature was infinitely pathetic.

"How that finds itself!" she responded joyously. "I dare say that you, monsieur, have dined also *chez* Foyot and at the Café Royal?"

I confessed.

Anne and Jackie had jumped down from their seats, whining and pulling at Mademoiselle's skirts.

"*Tout de suite, mes enfants, tout de suite.* Excuse me, monsieur." She rose. "Solitude makes one loquacious."

"In this case, mademoiselle," I answered, "the result has been insufficient. I shall ask for more." And I spoke truly. Mademoiselle interested me more than any one I had ever met in my cousin's house.

"Where did you unearth that deliciously quaint little governess, Clorinda?" I asked a few hours later, when my cousin, quite the last word of sporting elegance in her tweed suit, had resumed her duties as a nonchalant hostess of the most approved English type.

"Oh, Eve de la Tour Maubourg recommended her. She is of *la petite noblesse,* Napoleonic of course; she will have told you that. She was crazy to meet you, but don't let her bore you. She is a chronic nuisance on the subject of Napoleon. Some relation of Eve's went to the Sacré Cœur with her. She speaks wonderful French, but she is too old for the children. They get bored. I shall have to get rid of her in a few weeks. Amuse yourself, will you, while I see the chef about to-night's dinner. The housekeeper is ill. Isn't it funny how that sort of person always gets ill? I suppose she's bilious. They invariably are. I'm going to put you next Winona to-night. She is the only woman I know who really reads the books she says she does. I dare say she has read yours."

Clorinda disappeared indoors with a little gesture.

It was eleven o'clock, but no other guests had as yet appeared. I again found myself alone with the volume I had taken from the library. It turned out to be a book by Sully-Prudhomme with uncut leaves. The sun shimmered over the sunken garden. I could see the white dresses of the children and a small dark note in the midst of the riotous brilliance of the parterres, which I took to be the black alpaca of Mademoiselle. I strolled out toward it across the intervening lawn.

She was sitting on a bench busily working at a *petit point* embroidery.

"May I join you?" I said. "I love to talk of Paris. I used to see the French girls stitching at their tambours, just as you are doing now, in the Gardens of the Luxembourg, when I was a student. I lived in the Rue Madame and crossed the gardens every day on my way to the Sorbonne."

Her face brightened. "How you know our habits! All the young girls of the Rive Gauche go to the Luxembourg—Napoleon, by the way, inhabited the palace when he was consul. We always sat in the shadows of the statue of Marguerite de Valois, my sisters and myself. We were accompanied of course. And we all dressed alike. One spring we had toques with blue and black stripes. We were really very elegant that season."

"I am sure of it," I commented. "Can I smoke?" I settled back on the bench.

"But yes! I adore the odor of the tobacco, it is so virile."

A loud wail from behind the hedge interrupted us. "*Un instant, monsieur.*" She was gone with her fussy step.

Jackie had fallen on the gravel and, though quite uninjured, now refused to be comforted. Her figure looked old as she lugged him back toward the bench, refusing my aid.

"No, no, I must sing to him. You excuse me! It is that that will best quiet him."

Crooning she rocked the boy back and forward:

> "Si le roi m'avait donné Paris, sa grand'ville,
> Et qu'il fallût quitter l'amour de ma mie,
> Je dirais au roi Henri: 'Reprenez votre Paris;
> J'aime mieux ma mie, ô gué! j'aime mieux ma mie!'"

I listened astonished. Her thin voice had a crystalline quality, charming, young.

"They like my little songs, the children." She put down Jackie, who now trotted off to join the others. "I adore music. I once heard 'Mignon' at the Opéra Comique, the week before the disaster. Philine, what a rôle! 'Je suis Titania le blonde!'"

She twittered and trilled a bar or two of the famous

coloratura aria, quite unselfconsciously rapt in the enthusiasm of her memories.

"Figure to yourself that I wanted to enter the Conservatoire, to become a singer. But my parents disapproved. Besides, the cachet was heavy, and I should always have had to be accompanied to the lessons. My cousins de Teronville, who remained unmarried, were accompanied until their fortieth year. However, circumstances, after the death of my father, forced us to a greater freedom. I had to give lessons, instead of taking them. I remember the first afternoon that I went out alone. I was on my way to teach an American family lodged in the Hôtel Vendôme. Their windows gave on the Place. One could see the beautiful column. In the Rue de Rivoli I perceived that I was followed. I was frightened, but I had read the romances of Bourget and of Octave Feuillet (though my mother always pinned the pages together in the parts that were improper), and I was excited. Yes, monsieur, I avow that the sensation (one has these weaknesses) was not without pleasure. I hastened; he persisted. At last he accosted me. He was good looking, an *homme du monde, joli garçon,* perhaps on his way from the Jockey or the Volnay.

" 'Mademoiselle,' he said, raising his hat, 'can I offer you to dine?' He was charming. It was going too far, yet I comprehended his mistake. A young woman well brought up should not have been under the arcades of the Rue de Rivoli at that hour.

" 'I regret, monsieur,' said I—and I confess to you that I spoke truly— 'I regret, but I am not of the category that you imagine.' He looked at me sharply, but he recognized the situation at once. He was a man of the world.

" 'You cannot regret it more than I, mademoiselle; you pleased me. Accept my excuses and the expression of my respectful homage. Mademoiselle!' He was gone. I saw him once afterward. I was walking with my sister on the Avenue des Acacias, in the Bois. We had on our old capes; fortunately he did not recognize us. He was driving with a person very beautiful and elegant, seated on his left. You

know the significance, monsieur. I have often wondered—" She paused. "I have sometimes regretted that I did not accept his invitation, but *noblesse oblige*— As a descendant of a general of the Empire—"

"But, mademoiselle, you must have had many opportunities of sitting on a man's right—a girl pretty, charming, and with such an enchanting voice."

"Ah, monsieur, destiny willed otherwise. I had freshness, a good skin; I was not ugly; but I was the youngest of three sisters. It was unfortunate. Their husbands required considerable dowries. They were less well as to appearance, you see, difficult to place. My parents estimated I might attract with less expense. When my opportunity came, there was practically nothing left for my dot. It was a young man who had seen me at mass. I had noticed him behind the third pillar at the right of my prie-dieu ever since the Trinity. He wore glasses and had rather a sallow skin, and I cannot say that he troubled my devotions. Yet when at Easter his parents demanded for him my hand, I should have been glad to accept. As a married woman, monsieur, one enjoys privileges. However, his people were quite dissatisfied with our pecuniary offer. The affair did not realize itself." She sighed.

"Nevertheless, monsieur," she went on, "I had my romance. It was the summer after my sister married. I was visiting my aunt in St.-Jean-de-Luz. Large hats of the straw of Italy, leghorn you call them, were the mode. I had one, broad, with a wreath of roses and blue ribbons. It was charming. One day I had gone to gather flowers in a field near the railway station. It was a bright sunny day, and I wore a white muslin with an azure sash to match the ribbons on my hat. A train drew out of the station. It moved slowly; suddenly it stopped, halted. Directly opposite me was a compartment of the first class. A young man, dark, sad, romantic, what we call a *beau ténébreux* leaned from the door. Our glances met, hung, it seemed long. My poppies and my cornflowers fell to the ground. The train moved. The young man leaned far out. There was no laughter in his face. He blew me a kiss, not

lightly, I know it was not lightly; and, monsieur, what there was of the most extraordinary, I threw him one kiss, two kisses, kisses, kisses, until the train had quite vanished, until the gray smoke lay over the field and I had thrown myself crying among the wheat. He was in earnest, and it is evident if the train had not gone on— How life, monsieur, depends on little things!''

So this was the sum total! She had dined at a bourgeois restaurant; she had had a banal adventure in the Rue de Rivoli; she had been refused in marriage by a common-place family; an unknown youth had thrown her a kiss!

I took off my spectacles to wipe them. The tears were very near my eyes.

''Mademoiselle!'' called Clorinda's voice from the terrace.

She rose hurriedly to her feet. ''*Ah, mon Dieu,* it is the hour of the promenade on horseback, and I must prepare the children in their equestrian costumes. Jackie, Fifine, Anne! Monsieur, you excuse me.'' She bustled away.

For a long time I sat on the bench thinking of the tragedy of defeated womanhood, of the broad white canvas of a lifetime, meagerly scrawled with design, untouched by color.

The big luncheon table, edged with the chatter about polo and the impending visit of a prince (Clorinda's set is associated with those sports that conduct most directly toward Royalty), diverted my thoughts from the episode of the morning. Once I saw through the open door the flutter of a black skirt, and Mademoiselle dragging a reluctant youngster in the direction of an afternoon nap. But though I enjoy character study as a professional exercise and had been, besides, really drawn toward my cousin's quaint old governess, the lovely Daphne Sommerly, next whom I had finally been placed, invariably makes me ignore both my decade and my trade and exalts me to the godlike sensation of being as young and flippant as her glorious self. Indeed she so far prevailed over my homing instinct as to decide me to stay over until the morning. I had intended to take the midnight train. As I went up to bed, after an evening of bridge and chatter, a light streamed from the half-open door of Jackie's room,

and I perceived Mademoiselle in a flannel dressing-gown of nondescript color, bending over his cot. He was crying hysterically, only half awakened from a sleep evidently overpopulated with unpleasant dreams.

"Chut, chut!" Mademoiselle was saying. "It was nothing; he was in his own little bed. A man must never be afraid, not even a *little* man."

"But the big shadow," wailed Jackie, nervous and clinging. "I'm afraid of the big shadow."

"But, *mon enfant,*" she reassured him, "it is but the shadow of the big *armoire.* See, your hat-box on top of it makes it look like the shadow of the Emperor with his *tricorne,* the Emperor who feared nothing. *'En avant, soldats,'* he used to say. *'Quarante siècles nous regardent!'* " Mademoiselle brandished the candlestick which represented one of Clorinda's British affectations. "Come, my Jackie; you must be a good soldier."

"But I don't want to be a good soldier, and I don't care what's looking at me! I've got a pain in my stomach."

I passed on toward my room.

It was some weeks later that Miss Vermidelle Hawkins, the young person with a Cossack hair-cut, acquired in Greenwich Village, who types to my final dictation, and deals summarily with the insistencies of the telephone, announced to me that an elderly lady wished to see me.

"She seems to be French," said Vermidelle, "and says she met you at your cousin's."

I guessed at once that it was Mademoiselle and foresaw annoyance. She was interesting as a type, but I was extremely busy. Clorinda had probably dismissed her, and she would want me to help her find a post.

Her woe-begone air as she entered confirmed my worst anticipations. She was dressed as usual, neatly, and with a certain elderly coquetry.

"I was sure that you would receive me," she said, sitting on the edge of the big chair, her small, well-shod feet scarcely touching the ground. "It is, monsieur, that I see myself in

an alarming situation. I left the house of madame your cousin a few weeks ago, after an incident of the most deplorable. Monsieur, I suffered much in the household. The coldness, the lack of understanding, I had often death in my soul. But I supported all, monsieur, with what courage I could, until the culmination. But when Fifine threw into the duck-pond the inkstand of the Emperor, monsieur, I had a moment of vivacity. I slapped Fifine. . . . You see it was a relic of the family, a thing sacred." She drew out a large handkerchief and blew her nose in its exact middle. "I knew then that I could stay no longer. It would have been unworthy of me, of my family. I presented myself to your cousin and gave her my resignation. She refused me a reference. Nor, monsieur, would she consent to having the pond dragged to recover the inkstand. I address myself to you, monsieur, for two reasons: first, that I hoped you might persuade your cousin to restore the precious memento, and, secondly, because though I have been daily to the agencies for weeks, I am unable to place myself. My references are good, the Baronne de la Tour Maubourg, Lady Marchendale. One can wish for no better, yet everywhere they demand the sports. I offer the classics, history, our beautiful poetry, Châteaubriand, Lamartine, Victor Hugo. They require the tennis, the golf. And always, monsieur, they demand my age. Again and again the agent has proposed me by telephone, but when the clients see me it is always some excuse. Monsieur, I am discouraged, shattered."

The blurred blue of her eyes shimmered with tears. "A thought came to me: that literary gentleman is kind; why could I not be his amanuensis, arrange his affairs, his papers? I have order, system. I write a clear hand. I could transcribe his beautiful thoughts with sympathy. That has often been my dream, to serve some great man—and in this relation to you, monsieur, my age could only be of advantage." She paused, looking across at me with a sort of desperate hopefulness in her pleading eyes.

"You see," she added, "a friend has been giving me lodging, but she has a husband—I feel myself *de trop*. It would be an indiscretion for me to remain, and I near the end of

my resources." Her hands twitched nervously at the clasp of her hand-bag. I began fumblingly to explain to her that for my work I needed an expert typist and stenographer, a woman thoroughly conversant with English, and able to handle my business on the telephone.

"But, mademoiselle," I added, "let me help in some other way."

Her face had fallen into downward lines.

"Perhaps I could learn to type," she said. "My teachers told me I had a good touch on the piano, but the telephone, that makes my despair. I figured to myself that the demands on the secretary of a man of letters were quite different, keeping his shelves in order, caring for his fine editions, sorting his papers. It is unfortunate!"

Two round childlike tears brimmed from her blue eyes and lay for a moment on her finely wrinkled cheek. She again had recourse to the cotton handkerchief. I was distracted.

"Why won't you be my guest, let us say at the Martha Washington, for example? Just a few days while I consider what can be done for you? You could pay me back afterward," I said hurriedly. It was absurd. I was letting myself in for difficulty. It would be almost impossible to find a niche for her, but she was too forlornly pathetic to admit of reasoning.

She shook her head. "*Mais non, monsieur.* You will understand my gratitude, but it is impossible."

I could see the phrase, *femme entretenue,* written before her eyes.

"I would do as much for an aunt—for a sister," I substituted hastily. She had winced at the word aunt.

She rose rather stiffly.

"I understand," she said. "I am sorry it is not feasible for me to enter your employment in the way I had hoped. However, if you would speak to madame your cousin in relation to the inkstand, I should be grateful, monsieur. Its loss was of ill omen. And should you hear of any situation, where they do not demand either the telephone or the tennis—" Her small figure looked oddly old.

I promised to help, with a confidence I did not feel.

It was late the next afternoon that Clorinda telephoned. I was dressing for dinner and divined an emergency when my man told me it was Mrs. Crothers in person. Probably her guests were thirteen for the week-end, and she wanted me to fill in. I shoved the collar-button into my neck-band and hastened to the telephone, resolved to accept, in the interest of retrieving Mademoiselle's inkstand, and talking over her plight with Clorinda.

"That you, Jim?" Her voice was acridly high-pitched. "You remember that little French governess? Well, she left here weeks ago after a ridiculous tantrum about an ink-stand, and now to-night the Emergency Hospital on Welfare Island calls me up about her. It seems she's had an accident, run over by a taxi, or something, and they found my address on an envelope in her purse. The hospital people say somebody should go over there. Imagine, my dear, I've a houseful of guests arriving, and she'd left here anyway. Couldn't you be a lamb and go and see what it's all about? I dare say she isn't hurt much, or else that she's already dead. How awkward that would be, letting her people know and everything! Of course I could just let it go, but she *was* good when Jackie had diphtheria last year. And anyway, I'm so soft-hearted—"

I hung up the receiver with a bang. I had no stomach for the recital of Clorinda's virtues.

The island is the receptacle of many desolations; a huge trash-basket used by the great city opposite it for the flotsam and jetsam that it daily and hourly rejects as unfit for even *its* sinister purposes; a shelter for every sort of human misery.

There was a high wind blowing as I walked along the path by the water, passing the asylum, the prison, the reformatory, on my way to the hospital.

New York, across the river, sparkled, shone, glittered, terrific, Brobdingnagian, affirming itself in shelves upon shelves of human dwellings, in lights upon lights in the towering walls, that had offered no cranny for the poor, ineffectual, inadequate little creature I was about to visit.

A gust carried off my hat. I retrieved it. A prisoner shouted an incoherent obscenity at me as I turned up my coat collar and hurried on.

"She's pretty well all in," said the nurse who led the way to a bedside at the end of the ward. A white screen was around the bed. "They operated for fracture," she added.

Between heavy bandages swathing her neck and head, Mademoiselle's face looked small and white. It was not even bruised.

"She must have been thrown on her back against the curb. The fracture is at the base of the skull."

Mademoiselle lay quite still. Her body beneath the bedclothes made a small straight mound, like a child's grave covered with snow. Her eyes were closed, yet she was babbling incoherently.

"Monsieur de Châteaubriand, I desire a position as secretary to the great Napoleon. It is my right. I have his inkstand. . . . There are so many windows in the walls, but there are no stairs. They keep saying there is no room for me —no room—no room—but if I could only find the stairs—and my references they are magnificent, all the poets and Napoleon Bonaparte. *Tenez,* I am the great-granddaughter of Lavalette. Only without the inkstand you do not recognize me."

"She goes on like that for hours," said the nurse, readjusting the pillows with unfeeling kindness.

I sat down on a chair beside her bed. For a few moments she fell into a stupor; then she began to toss.

"Quiet, deary," said the nurse. "They ought not to move in these fracture cases," she explained.

Mademoiselle was talking again, moaning now. "It's at the bottom of the lake, 'The Lake of Lamartine'; you know the poem. And the lake is black, black—oh—oh—" her wail rose to shrill terror. "I am alone—the country is so strange, and I've dropped all the poppies . . . and the shadow—and I am afraid—afraid—" She whimpered like a lost child.

Suddenly the scene in Jackie's room on the night of my

first meeting with her rose to my memory. "Hush, hush!" I said soothingly, and then loudly, dramatically, that they might pierce the clouded senses, I spoke the words she must so often have whispered to her own heart:

"*Courage, soldats, quarante siècles nous regardent.*"

All at once she sat up, flung her arms wide, looking straight before her. The light shone on her white face, on her eyes clear and blue.

"It is the Sun of Austerlitz!" she cried. Her voice rose crystalline, joyous, young. She was still smiling as she fell back upon the pillows.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What is the effect of the unusually long introduction?
2. Why does the author use so many words that are not often heard in ordinary conversation?
3. Why does the author choose to write from the point of view of a man?
4. What is Mademoiselle's appearance?
5. What is Mademoiselle's character?
6. What is the complete story of Mademoiselle's life?
7. How do you account for her infatuation with Napoleon?
8. Why does the author include many French words?
9. Why does the guest find Mademoiselle more interesting than any one else in his cousin's home?
10. What values does the story gain through the inclusion of the two children and their doings?
11. How does the author awaken sympathy for Mademoiselle?
12. To what French writers does the story allude?
13. Tell the story of Mademoiselle's romantic adventures.
14. In what respects was Mademoiselle's life a tragedy of defeated womanhood?
15. Why did Fifine throw the Emperor's inkstand into the pond?
16. For what do we admire Mademoiselle?
17. What are the characteristics of Mademoiselle's mistress?
18. For what do we pity Mademoiselle?
19. Explain the dramatic conclusion of the story.
20. What are the principal divisions of the story?
21. In what respects is the story a satire?
22. What makes the story excellent?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"Mademoiselle" is a character sketch with only such action as is needed to develop characterization, arouse interest, and give dramatic values. Against the background of a fashionable and frivolous American home the author presents the pathetic figure of a French governess whose life has been drab and restricted in the extreme. Since her intensely romantic nature can find satisfaction nowhere else, she has become infatuated by her idealization of Napoleon, from one of whose generals she is descended. When the years bring her life to a tragic end, she gains comfort, even at the last, by hearing the inspiring words of the man whom she adores.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, think of a person who can find in the world about him no gratification of some intense desire, and who therefore seeks it in the world of dreams. Instead of telling the story in a straightforward manner, tell it as a series of incidents that came within your own experience.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. A person who has become blind lives in a world of imagined beauty.
2. A person, born in rural surroundings, and now obliged to live in intensely disagreeable city surroundings, thinks continually of rural scenes.
3. A deaf musician remembers the work of great musicians whom he has heard.
4. A bed-ridden old woman relives the life of her childhood.
5. A man who once spoke with Abraham Lincoln centers his thoughts on Lincoln and his work.

THE FACTS IN THE CASE OF THE GREAT BEEF CONTRACT *

By Mark Twain

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835–1910), better known as "Mark Twain," won the highest place among American humorous writers. He was born in a rough Mississippi river town in Missouri, where he could acquire only a slight education. After interesting experiences as a wandering printer, he became in turn pilot of a Mississippi river steamboat, miner in Nevada, newspaper reporter, traveling correspondent, and author. When he won fame and money by his humorous writing, he continued to travel much, and often spent many months abroad. His principal place of residence in the United States was Hartford, Connecticut. Among his best books are the following: *Innocents Abroad* (1869), *Roughing It* (1872), *A Tramp Abroad* (1880), *The Prince and the Pauper* (1882), *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), *The Gilded Age* (1874), *Tom Sawyer* (1875), *Huckleberry Finn* (1884), *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889), *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894) *Joan of Arc* (1896), *Following the Equator* (1897).

IN as few words as possible I wish to lay before the nation what share, howsoever small, I have had in this matter—this matter which has so exercised the public mind, engendered so much ill-feeling, and so filled the newspapers of both continents with distorted statements and extravagant comments.

The origin of this distressful thing was this—and I assert here that every fact in the following résumé can be amply proved by the official records of the General Government:

John Wilson Mackenzie, of Rotterdam, Chemung County, New Jersey, deceased, contracted with the General Govern-

* From *Sketches, New and Old*, by Mark Twain, copyright, 1875, 1899, 1903, by Samuel L. Clemens; 1917 by Clara Gabrilowitsch; 1922, by the Mark Twain Company. Reprinted by special permission of Harper & Brothers, the publishers.

ment, on or about the 10th day of October, 1861, to furnish to General Sherman the sum total of thirty barrels of beef.

Very well.

He started after Sherman with the beef, but when he got to Washington Sherman had gone to Manassas; so he took the beef and followed him there, but arrived too late; he followed him to Nashville, and from Nashville to Chattanooga, and from Chattanooga to Atlanta—but he never could overtake him. At Atlanta he took a fresh start and followed him clear through his march to the sea. He arrived too late again by a few days; but hearing that Sherman was going out in the *Quaker City* excursion to the Holy Land, he took shipping for Beirut, calculating to head off the other vessel. When he arrived in Jerusalem with his beef, he learned that Sherman had not sailed in the *Quaker City*, but had gone to the Plains to fight the Indians. He returned to America and started for the Rocky Mountains. After sixty-eight days of arduous travel on the Plains, and when he had got within four miles of Sherman's headquarters, he was tomahawked and scalped, and the Indians got the beef. They got all of it but one barrel. Sherman's army captured that, and so, even in death, the bold navigator partly fulfilled his contract. In his will, which he had kept like a journal, he bequeathed the contract to his son Bartholomew W. Bartholomew W. made out the following bill, and then died:

THE UNITED STATES

In account with JOHN WILSON MACKENZIE, of New Jersey, deceased, ... Dr.

To thirty barrels of beef for General Sherman, at $100,.....	$ 3,000
To traveling expense and transportation.....	14,000
Total, ...	$17,000

Rec'd Pay't.

He died then; but he left the contract to Wm. J. Martin, who tried to collect it, but died before he got through. *He* left it to Barker J. Allen, and he tried to collect it also. He did not survive. Barker J. Allen left it to Anson G. Rogers, who at-

Courtesy of St. Nicholas Magazine.

"He started after Sherman with the beef."

tempted to collect it, and got along as far as the Ninth Auditor's Office, when Death, the great Leveler, came all unsummoned, and foreclosed on *him* also. He left the bill to a relative of his in Connecticut, Vengeance Hopkins by name, who lasted four weeks and two days, and made the best time on record, coming within one of reaching the Twelfth Auditor. In his will he gave the contract bill to his uncle, by the name of O-be-joyful Johnson. It was too undermining for Joyful. His last words were: "Weep not for me—*I* am willing to go." And so he was, poor soul. Seven people inherited the contract after that; but they all died. So it came into my hands at last. It fell to me through a relative by the name of Hubbard—Bethlehem Hubbard, of Indiana. He had had a grudge against me for a long time; but in his last moments he sent for me, and forgave me everything, and, weeping, gave me the beef contract.

This ends the history of it up to the time that I succeeded to the property. I will now endeavor to set myself straight before the nation in everything that concerns my share in the matter. I took this beef contract, and the bill for mileage and transportation, to the President of the United States.

He said, "Well, sir, what can I do for you?"

I said, "Sire, on or about the 10th day of October, 1861, John Wilson Mackenzie, of Rotterdam, Chemung County, New Jersey, deceased, contracted with the General Government to furnish to General Sherman the sum total of thirty barrels of beef—"

He stopped me there, and dismissed me from his presence—kindly, but firmly. The next day I called on the Secretary of State.

He said, "Well, sir?"

I said, "Your Royal Highness: on or about the 10th day of October, 1861, John Wilson Mackenzie, of Rotterdam, Chemung County, New Jersey, deceased, contracted with the General Government to furnish to General Sherman the sum total of thirty barrels of beef—"

"That will do, sir—that will do; this office has nothing to do with contracts for beef."

I was bowed out. I thought the matter all over, and finally, the following day, I visited the Secretary of the Navy, who said, "Speak quickly, sir; do not keep me waiting."

I said, "Your Royal Highness, on or about the 10th day of October, 1861, John Wilson Mackenzie, of Rotterdam, Chemung County, New Jersey, deceased, contracted with the General Government to General Sherman the sum total of thirty barrels of beef—"

Well, it was as far as I could get. *He* had nothing to do with beef contracts for General Sherman, either. I began to think it was a curious kind of a government. It looked somewhat as if they wanted to get out of paying for that beef. The following day I went to the Secretary of the Interior.

I said, "Your Imperial Highness, on or about the 10th day of October—"

"That is sufficient, sir. I have heard of you before. Go, take your infamous beef contract out of this establishment. The Interior Department has nothing whatever to do with subsistence for the army."

I went away. But I was exasperated now. I said I would haunt them; I would infest every department of this iniquitous government till that contract business was settled. I would collect that bill, or fall, as fell my predecessors, trying. I assailed the Postmaster-General; I besieged the Agricultural Department; I waylaid the Speaker of the House of Representatives. *They* had nothing to do with army contracts for beef. I moved upon the Commissioner of the Patent Office.

I said, "Your August Excellency, on or about—"

"Perdition! have you got *here* with your incendiary beef contract, at last? We have *nothing* to do with beef contracts for the army, my dear sir."

"Oh, that is all very well—but *somebody* has got to pay for that beef. It has got to be paid *now*, too, or I'll confiscate this old Patent Office and everything in it."

"But, my dear sir—"

"It don't make any difference, sir. The Patent Office is liable for that beef, I reckon; and, liable or not liable, the Patent Office has got to pay for it."

Never mind the details. It ended in a fight. The Patent Office won. But I found out something to my advantage. I was told that the Treasury Department was the proper place for me to go to. I went there. I waited two hours and a half, and then I was admitted to the First Lord of the Treasury.

I said, "Most noble, grave, and reverend Signor, on or about the 10th day of October, 1861, John Wilson Macken—"

"That is sufficient, sir. I have heard of you. Go to the First Auditor of the Treasury."

I did so. He sent me to the Second Auditor. The Second Auditor sent me to the Third, and the Third sent me to the First Comptroller of the Corn-Beef Division. This began to look like business. He examined his books and all his loose papers, but found no minute of the beef contract. I went to the Second Comptroller of the Corn-Beef Division. He examined his books and his loose papers, but with no success. I was encouraged. During that week I got as far as the Sixth Comptroller in that division; the next week I got through the Claims Department; the third week I began and completed the Mislaid Contracts Department, and got a foothold in the Dead Reckoning Department. I finished that in three days. There was only one place left for it now. I laid siege to the Commissioner of Odds and Ends. To his clerk, rather—he was not there himself. There were sixteen beautiful young ladies in the room, writing in books, and there were seven well-favored young clerks showing them how. The young women smiled up over their shoulders, and the clerks smiled back at them, and all went merry as a marriage bell. Two or three clerks that were reading the newspapers looked at me rather hard, but went on reading, and nobody said anything. However, I had been used to this kind of alacrity from Fourth Assistant Junior Clerks all through my eventful career, from the very day I entered the first office of the Corn-Beef Bureau clear till I passed out of the last one in the Dead Reckoning Division. I had got so accomplished by this time that I could stand on one foot from the moment I entered an office till a clerk spoke to me, without changing more than two, or maybe three, times.

So I stood there till I had changed four different times. Then I said to one of the clerks who was reading:

"Illustrious Vagrant, where is the Grand Turk?"

"What do you mean, sir? whom do you mean? If you mean the Chief of the Bureau, he is out."

"Will he visit the harem to-day?"

The young man glared upon me awhile, and then went on reading his paper. But I knew the ways of those clerks. I knew I was safe if he got through before another New York mail arrived. He only had two more papers left. After a while he finished them, and then he yawned and asked me what I wanted.

"Renowned and honored Imbecile: on or about—"

"You are the beef-contract man. Give me your papers."

He took them, and for a long time he ransacked his odds and ends. Finally he found the Northwest Passage, as *I* regarded it—he found the long-lost record of that beef contract—he found the rock upon which so many of my ancestors had split before they ever got to it. I was deeply moved. And yet I rejoiced—for I had survived. I said with emotion, "Give it me. The government will settle now." He waved me back, and said there was something yet to be done first.

"Where is this John Wilson Mackenzie?" said he.

"Dead."

"When did he die?"

"He didn't die at all—he was killed."

"How?"

"Tomahawked."

"Who tomahawked him?"

"Why, an Indian, of course. You didn't suppose it was the superintendent of a Sunday-school, did you?"

"No. An Indian, was it?"

"The same."

"Name of the Indian?"

"His name? *I* don't know his name."

"*Must* have his name. Who saw the tomahawking done?"

"I don't know."

"You were not present yourself, then?"

"Which you can see by my hair. I was absent."

"Then how do you know that Mackenzie is dead?"

"Because he certainly died at that time, and I have every reason to believe that he has been dead ever since. I *know* he has, in fact."

"We must have proofs. Have you got the Indian?"

"Of course not."

"Well, you must get him. Have you got the tomahawk?"

"I never thought of such a thing."

"You must get the tomahawk. You must produce the Indian and the tomahawk. If Mackenzie's death can be proven by these, you can then go before the commisison appointed to audit claims with some show of getting your bill under such headway that your children may possibly live to receive the money and enjoy it. But that man's death *must* be proven. However, I may as well tell you that the government will never pay that transportation and those traveling expenses of the lamented Mackenzie. It *may* possibly pay for the barrel of beef that Sherman's soldiers captured, if you can get a relief bill through Congress making an appropriation for that purpose; but it will not pay for the twenty-nine barrels the Indians ate."

"Then there is only a hundred dollars due me, and *that* isn't certain! After all Mackenzie's travels in Europe, Asia, and America with that beef; after all his trials and tribulations and transportation; after the slaughter of all those innocents that tried to collect that bill! Young man, why didn't the First Comptroller of the Corn-Beef Division tell me this?"

"He didn't know anything about the genuineness of your claim."

"Why didn't the Second tell me? why didn't the Third? why didn't all those divisions and departments tell me?"

"None of them knew. We do things by routine here. You have followed the routine and found out what you wanted to know. It is the best way. It is the only way. It is very regular, and very slow, but it is very certain."

"Yes, certain death. It has been, to the most of our tribe.

I begin to feel that I, too, am called. Young man, you love the bright creature yonder with the gentle blue eyes and the steel pens behind her ears—I see it in your soft glances; you wish to marry her—but you are poor. Here, hold out your hand—here is the beef contract; go, take her and be happy! Heaven bless you, my children!"

This is all I know about the great beef contract that has created so much talk in the community. The clerk to whom I bequeathed it died. I know nothing further about the contract, or any one connected with it. I only know that if a man lives long enough he can trace a thing through the Circumlocution Office of Washington and find out, after much labor and trouble and delay, that which he could have found out on the first day if the business of the Circumlocution Office were as ingeniously systematized as it would be if it were a great private mercantile institution.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What is the purpose of the first paragraph?
2. By what means does the author give the story an atmosphere of reality?
3. By what various methods does the author make the story humorous?
4. Why does the author repeat certain words and phrases?
5. At what points in the story is exaggeration most marked?
6. On what actual facts is the story founded?
7. What are the principal divisions of the story?
8. What is the author's purpose?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

Amused by reports of unusual delays in connection with government departments, Mark Twain wrote "The Facts in the Case of the Great Beef Contract." By means of exaggeration he satirized unnecessary insistence upon formality. He wrote in simple language, and gave his story some of the appearance of truth by seeming to refer to official records. He employed crisp dialogue, almost monosyllabic in nature.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, choose as a subject any mild annoyance, and then, as if you yourself had had trouble in that

connection, present a personal account that will greatly exaggerate the difficulty.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. You have difficulty in understanding a railroad time-table.
2. You become confused in trying to follow school regulations.
3. You find it almost impossible to learn how to go to a certain place.
4. You experience annoyance in trying to follow printed directions that tell how to put together the parts of a piece of household apparatus.
5. You endeavor to follow a cooking recipe.

FATHER IS ANGRY *

By William Hazlett Upson

William Hazlett Upson was born in Glen Ridge, New Jersey, in 1891. He is a graduate of Cornell University, where he received the degree of Bachelor of Science. During the World War he served as private in the 13th Field Artillery, 4th Division, U. S. A. From 1919 to 1924 he was employed in the service department of the Caterpillar Tractor Co., of Peoria, Illinois. He is the author of *The Piano Movers* (1927), *Me and Henry and the Artillery* (1928), and of many short stories that have appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Collier's Weekly*, and other publications. He now lives at Bread Loaf, Vermont.

LATE one Thursday afternoon Mr. Gilbert Henderson was called to the telephone.

"Hello," said a feminine voice. "I want the Farmers' Friend Tractor Company at Earthworm City—the people that make the Earthworm tractors. I want the service department."

"This is the service department. This is Gilbert Henderson, sales and service manager."

"Well, this is Miss Gladys Jenkins speaking. And I hate to bother you, but father is very angry. He would have called you himself, but he's a little deaf, you know. He's not much good on long distance. So he wanted me to tell you to send a man down at once. Right away, he said."

"Let me get this straight. Who did you say you were?"

"Miss Gladys Jenkins, of Scipio, Illinois."

"And your father is angry because he's deaf? And he wants me to send a man down? I don't understand. This factory makes Earthworm tractors, not ear trumpets."

* From *The Saturday Evening Post*. Reprinted by permission of William Hazlett Upson. Copyright, 1929, by William Hazlett Upson. Reprinted by permission of *The Saturday Evening Post*, copyright, 1929, Curtis Publishing Co.

"Oh, Mr. Henderson, you are so witty. But you really must try to be serious."

"I am perfectly serious. Just who is your father?"

"Father is Mr. Henry Jenkins, of Scipio, Illinois. He has just bought one of your Earthworm tractors. You ought to know that."

"Oh, yes, now I place you. It was a five-ton model. It was delivered yesterday. The sale was made by George Sherwood —one of our salesmen."

"Yes, Mr. Henderson. The tractor came yesterday, and father says it is no good. It has no power. It won't pull. He can't fix it himself, and he says for you to send a man down."

"All right, Miss Jenkins, you tell your father not to worry. When we sell a tractor we stand behind it, and we see that it works right. I can't send you a man right away. All my extra men are up in Minnesota at a big demonstration we're putting on at Pryor Lake. But I'll have somebody by the middle of next week sure."

"Well, I don't know, Mr. Henderson, but I'm afraid father won't be satisfied. He wants somebody right away."

"What's the hurry?"

"He has a brand-new combined harvester. It's as big as a two-car garage. The idea is, you drag it through the fields and it cuts the wheat and threshes it at the same time."

"Yes, yes. I understand."

"Most of the farmers around here still use binders, and then thresh the stuff later. But father is very progressive. He wants only the latest and best."

"Quite right."

"And he has six hundred acres of wheat all ready to cut. So he wants the tractor fixed up right away."

"Couldn't the wheat wait a few days?"

"Maybe. But that isn't all. You see the combine is stuck in the mud, and father is all hot and bothered about it. He's funny that way. He get's excited very easy."

"The combine is stuck in the mud? How did that happen?"

"This morning father started to drive the tractor, with the

combine hooked on behind, from town out to the farm. And when he came to Goose Creek he decided the bridge was too weak for such a heavy load. And as Mr. Sherwood had told him an Earthworm tractor would go through any sort of mud and soft ground, he drove down off the road and started to ford the stream."

"Yes?"

"Well, it was a poor idea, Mr. Henderson. The combine got stuck right in the middle of Goose Creek."

"Well, well. That's too bad."

"Yes, that's what father seems to think. And he says it's all the fault of the tractor. It ran fine under a light load, but as soon as he got into the mud and opened the throttle a bit, the motor began to cough and spit, and wasn't any good at all. He finally got the tractor out and drove it home. But the combine is still there, and it is sinking deeper and deeper into the mud of the creek bottom."

"How big a stream is this Goose Creek?"

"It's not more than a foot deep right now. We've been having dry weather. But father says a good storm would raise it so high it would probably wash the combine half a mile or so downstream and over Hopkins' Dam. And a combine wouldn't be much good after it got washed over a dam, would it, Mr. Henderson?"

"No, I suppose not."

"Father says he might pull it out with a block and tackle, only there's nothing to anchor to, and the ground is too soft to set a post that would hold. So you better send a mechanic down here right away. Don't you think so, Mr. Henderson?"

"Well, I guess you're right. You tell your father we'll take care of him. We'll find a mechanic somewhere and have him there to-morrow morning."

"Oh, thank you so much, Mr. Henderson. I really hated to bother you, but you see father takes these things so seriously. And he is so sort of virile. When he gets really mad I can't do a thing with him. But now I'm sure everything will be all right. Thank you so much."

"Not at all, Miss Jenkins."

"Well, good-by, Mr. Henderson."

"Good-by."

Mr. Henderson hung up the receiver, thought for a moment or two, and then put in a call for Mr. George Sherwood, at the Rogers House, Galesburg. Ten minutes later he was connected.

"Hello, George," he said. "This is Gilbert Henderson."

"Yes, Mr. Henderson."

"I got a little extra job for you, George. You remember Henry Jenkins down at Scipio?"

"Sure. I sold him a five-ton. It was delivered yesterday, wasn't it?"

"Yeah. And he's having trouble. Got stuck in the mud with a combined harvester. Claims the tractor won't pull. No power. All the service men are busy, so I want you to stop off at Scipio on your way to St. Louis tomorrow morning and see what's the matter. Be sure you get him fixed up. He's only paid five hundred down on it."

"Yes, I know. Balance of thirty-five hundred in thirty days. But don't worry. I'll stop off and fix him up."

"All right, I'll count on you. Give me a ring in the morning and let me know how you come out."

"Very good, Mr. Henderson."

"So long."

"So long."

The next morning Mr. George Sherwood called from Scipio, Illinois.

"Hello, is that you, Mr. Henderson?"

"Yes."

"This is George Sherwood. I've just been out to see Jenkins. It's a lucky thing you sent me. The old guy was sore as a boil, but I smoothed him down fine. It takes me to smooth 'em down when they get all ruffled up this way."

"What was the trouble?"

"Same old story. Nine-tenths of these tractor troubles are in the mind of the operator. This guy Jenkins got his combine stuck in the mud. And then, just because the tractor didn't pull it out the first try, he lost his head. He unhooked

the machine, drove home, and began hollering for help from the factory. Believe me, he was mad too."

"So what did you do?"

"Oh, I gave him a nice little talk. He's so deaf I pretty nearly ruined my voice yelling. I told him to keep calm and not worry—take it easy and let in the clutch slow and gentle when he started pulling. Any motor will stall if you put in the clutch too quick—you know that."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Then I drove the tractor around the barnyard a few times, and it ran as slick as a whistle. Even old man Jenkins had to admit that."

"Did you get the combine out of the mud?"

"No, I had to come back to town to catch my train for St. Louis. It's due in a couple of minutes, and it's the last train till tomorrow."

"Don't you think you should have stayed until he got out? You know he still owes a balance of thirty-five hundred. And if he doesn't think the machine is right, he is liable to hold up payment."

"Don't worry about that, Mr. Henderson. When that payment is due we'll get it. I talked to that guy for over half an hour. And when I left he was convinced that the Earthworm is the greatest piece of machinery ever put together. Here's my train; I'll have to go. Good-by."

There was a click as he hung up the receiver.

Late that afternoon, Mr. Henderson received another call from Scipio.

"Hello, is that Mr. Gilbert Henderson?"

"This is Henderson speaking."

"Well, this is Miss Gladys Jenkins, and father wants me to give you a message. He says to tell you that the Earthworm tractor is the lousiest bunch of stove iron that was ever throwed together, and that Mr. George Sherwood is the biggest liar this side of New York City."

"Well, really, Miss Jenkins, I don't understand why you should call me up and make any such statement as that. Surely—"

Courtesy of Tony Sarg.

"He's so deaf I pretty nearly ruined my voice yelling."

"Oh, I'm not making any such statement. It's father. You see, he's a little deaf, and he can't use the telephone very well—especially long distance."

"Yes, yes. You told me that yesterday."

"So he wanted me to call you up. And he insisted that I give you the message word for word. Of course I hate to bother you, Mr. Henderson, and you understand I have nothing against you personally. And I haven't anything against Mr. Sherwood. But father seems to be really terribly excited. He's all covered with mud, and he's walking around and around the kitchen muttering to himself."

"You don't mean there has been some further trouble with the tractor?"

"Well, yes, I'm afraid there has. Or at least father seems to think so."

"But I thought Mr. Sherwood was there this morning and fixed things up."

"Oh, yes. Mr. Sherwood was here, and he was very polite. He is a very nice man. He explained to father that the tractor was really all right, and he told him just what to do to get the combine out of the mud. You remember I told you yesterday that father's new combine was stuck in the mud down in Goose Creek."

"Yes, I remember."

"Well, father drove the tractor down to pull out the combine, and he got the tractor so deep in the mud that now the tractor is stuck too. And that isn't all."

"That isn't all?"

"No. Father walked all the way to town and got a Mr. Smith to come out with his big truck to try to pull out the tractor and the combine."

"Yes?"

"They didn't dare take the truck off the road, because the ground on both sides of the creek is very soft and marshy. They brought out a big long cable. But they couldn't do any good with that, and finally the truck skidded off the road, and now that is stuck in the mud too."

"Well, you people are certainly having hard luck."

"Yes, that's what father thinks. And he says it is all the fault of the tractor. He says every time he tries to give her the gas she just coughs and won't pull at all. But if he had proper power he says he could get out easy, and pull out the combine and the truck too. But in the meantime, there they are—slowly sinking deeper and deeper into the mud. Isn't it fascinating?"

"What do you mean—fascinating?"

"I mean, doesn't it give you a sort of weird fascinating feeling? Just thinking about all that expensive machinery out there, sinking slowly and relentlessly—down, down, down."

"Yes, I see what you mean. I guess I'll have to send a service man as soon as I can."

"Yes, I think that is father's idea too. He says if you don't get some action on this right away, he won't pay the balance he owes you, and you'll have to give him back what he's paid already, or he'll sue you. He says the wheat is ripe and starting to fall down, and he wants to get busy."

"Well, you tell him not to worry."

"If it should rain before we get that stuff out of the creek, he might worry quite a bit. And when father is worried he carries on something terrible."

"Yes, I understand. You tell your father I'll get somebody down there tomorrow."

"Oh, thank you so much, Mr. Henderson. And, by the way, perhaps you had better not send Mr. Sherwood. I'm afraid it would irritate father. You see, father is pretty sore already. He came home here a little while ago all covered with mud from messing around in the creek bottom, and he has sort of a wild look in his eye. And he thinks Mr. Sherwood lied to him. You know—telling him the tractor was all right, when apparently it wasn't."

"We couldn't send Mr. Sherwood anyway. He has gone to St. Louis."

"You understand I have nothing against Mr. Sherwood myself, Mr. Henderson."

"Sure; that's all right."

"It's just that I'm afraid he might irritate father. Personally, I think Mr. Sherwood is a real gentleman. He certainly was polite enough to me. We had quite a talk."

"You don't say. Maybe if George would tend to business more and women less, he would be better off."

"What was that, Mr. Henderson?"

"Nothing. Tell your father we'll send him a man."

"Thank you so much, Mr. Henderson."

"Not at all. Good-by."

Mr. Henderson at once called the factory operator and was connected with Mr. Julius West, chief engineer of the Farmers' Friend Tractor Company.

"Hello. That you, West?"

"Yes."

"This is Gilbert Henderson talking. I'm in sort of a jam. We've got a new tractor broken down over at Scipio. Got to get it fixed up right away or the guy won't pay for it. All the service men are up at the demonstration at Pryor Lake."

"That's not my funeral."

"No, I know it isn't; but I was wondering if you didn't have some bright young man up there in the engineering department you could lend me for a day or so. I certainly would appreciate it if you can."

"Well, let me see. Yes, I could let you have young Harold Manville. He's not much use around here."

"But if he's no use around there, what use would he be to me? This is serious, West. I got to have a good man."

"Oh, Harold is all right. I was just kidding. He's a college graduate—graduated this June. And he's bright. Knows more about engineering than I do myself."

"That might be easy enough."

"Is that so? Well, if you want this guy, you can have him. If not, it's nothing to me. Take him or leave him. There's nobody else I could send."

"All right, I'll take him. And much obliged. Just put him on the wire, will you?"

"Right."

There was a pause, and then another voice spoke:

"Hello. This is Harold Manville speaking."

"This is Gilbert Henderson—Sales and Service."

"Yes, Mr. Henderson. Mr. West says I am to do some work for you."

"Correct. You know anything about gas engines?"

"Certainly, Mr. Henderson. I'm an M. E."

"You're a what?"

"I have the degree of mechanical engineer."

"Oh, I see. Did you learn anything about machinery?"

"I specialized in internal-combustion engines. And I stood well in my studies. I made Tau Beta Pi."

"You made what?"

"I was elected to Tau Beta Pi. That's the engineering honorary society."

"Oh, I see. That's very nice. What are you doing now?"

"I'm in the drafting room."

"You make these blue prints?"

"No, I make the tracings from which the blue prints are made."

"Quite right. My mistake. Well, do you think you could fix a tractor that is broken down?"

"Certainly."

"All right; I'll tell you what you're to do. Got a pencil and paper?"

"Yes, Mr. Henderson."

"Fine. Take this down. First thing tomorrow morning you get the service-department roadster from the factory garage. You drive to Scipio, Illinois. It's about fifty miles. You find Mr. Henry Jenkins. He lives on a farm outside the town. Got that?"

"Yes, Mr. Henderson."

"This Henry Jenkins has a five-ton Earthworm tractor that isn't running right. You find out what's the matter, and fix it. Understand?"

"Absolutely."

"All right. I hope you know you're stuff. Let me know how you comé out. Good-by."

And Mr. Henderson hung up the receiver. About the

middle of the next morning—Saturday—there was another call from Scipio.

"Hello, is this Mr. Gilbert Henderson?"

"Yes."

"Well, this is Miss Gladys Jenkins."

"Yes."

"Down at Scipio."

"Yes."

"You remember, I called you up yesterday?"

"Yes."

"Well, I just called again to make sure that you are sending us a man to fix the tractor."

"Hasn't he got there yet?"

"Who?"

"The man I sent."

"We haven't seen anybody."

"Well, I sent you a man this morning. He'll be there any time now. He's one of our engineers—a very high-class man."

"Oh, I'm so glad, Mr. Henderson. I was a little worried. Because you have no idea of the state father is in. Honestly, Mr. Henderson, you ought to see him. He is fit to be chained up and a muzzle put on him."

"I hope there has been no more hard luck?"

"No, it's just that this whole business gets on his nerves. It sort of gnaws on him. Every day the wheat gets riper and riper. And of course it may rain any time. All the while the combine and the tractor are sinking slowly deeper and deeper into the bottom of Goose Creek. And you take a nervous, high-strung man like father, and it is bound to worry him a bit."

"Yes, I can imagine it might."

"He was down at the creek early this morning with the Steel Elephant tractor salesman, and when he came back he said that the combine had sunk about a foot during the night, and the tractor about six inches—all of which didn't seem to cheer him up any."

"No, I can see that it wouldn't. But what's this about a salesman from the Steel Elephant Tractor Company? Your father isn't thinking of buying one of those machines, is he?"

"Well, he was thinking of it. You see, this Steel Elephant man called up last night and said he had a demonstration machine down at Scipio, and he offered to pull the combine out of the mud if father would refuse to accept the Earthworm and buy the Steel Elephant."

"Why, the big bum! And what did your father say?"

"He said he would buy the Steel Elephant if it pulled out his combine. So early this morning father went down to the creek, and this man brought his tractor out from town. First he dragged Mr. Smith's truck up onto the road, and then he tackled the combine."

"He didn't pull it out, did he?"

"He hasn't yet. In fact, when father left, the Steel Elephant was stuck in the mud too."

"It would be. That Steel Elephant has pretty fair power, but it can't get traction when it's in the mud."

"Yes, that's what father says. He also says that the Earthworm would be fine to go through mud, only the Earthworm has no power. And father says if you have no power you can't go anywhere. How is that for a wise crack? . . . Oh, just a minute, Mr. Henderson. A man is driving into the yard. What a good-looking man! Maybe it's the engineer you sent. Wait till I find out."

There was a long pause. Then Miss Jenkins spoke once more:

"Still there, Mr. Henderson?"

"Yes."

"Well, everything is fine. Your engineer has arrived. He says his name is Manville and he seems very nice. I'm sure he will fix the tractor all right. You don't know how I appreciate everything you are doing for us, Mr. Henderson."

"It's just business, Miss Jenkins. When we sell a tractor, we stand behind it. If there is anything wrong, we make it right."

"I'm sure you do, Mr. Henderson. Well, I must go out now and see how father is getting along with Mr. Manville. Good-by."

"Good-by, Miss Jenkins."

There was no more news from Scipio that day. The next day, which was Sunday, Mr. Henderson spent at home. On Monday morning, as soon as he reached the office, he was called to the telephone.

"Hello. Mr. Henderson?"

"Yes."

"This is Harold Manville speaking. I thought you might like a report on Mr. Jenkins. I found that he had his tractor and a big combined harvester and a Steel Elephant tractor all stuck in the mud in the bottom of a creek."

"Yes, I know that part. Did you get them out?"

"Not yet. I ran into some pretty serious trouble. I'm still working on it."

"That's too bad. I was hoping it might be something simple. Lots of times these new owners raise a big howl and we find it's nothing but fouled spark plugs or the clutch slipping or something."

"This case is worse than that. In fact, it's a good thing you sent an engineer like myself, rather than an ordinary mechanic."

"You don't say. What exactly is the matter with the tractor?"

"There seems to be a fundamental defect in the functioning of the motor."

"I don't think I quite understand."

"Well, you might explain it by saying there is a basic lack of coördination in the way the different moving elements of this motor are integrated to one another, and to the particular fuel and lubricants which are being used in its operation."

"I'm afraid I don't get you. What I want to know is what is the matter. They told me the machine had no power. Is that right?"

"Yes. The motor runs fairly well until you put a load on it. Then it begins to miss and run very badly."

"And you say you're working on it. What are you doing?"

"I'm making a thorough scientific investigation. I worked until dark Saturday, and I worked most of Sunday. When I

get a job, Mr. Henderson, I stick right to it until it's done. I don't mind working overtime."

"That's very praiseworthy, I'm sure. But I'd like to know just what you're doing."

"Well, first of all I assumed, as a working hypothesis, that the motor actually was developing less than its rated forty horse power. This was indicated by the way it missed and failed to move the machine out of the mud."

"Yes, yes."

"Of course it would have been better if I could have tested it to make sure. I had a dynamometer with me, and if I could have hooked up to a load and pulled it over a measured distance on solid ground, I could have determined the exact drawbar horse power. But as the tractor was stuck in the mud, this was impracticable. And of course I had no equipment to make a direct dynamo test or Prony brake test."

"Listen. What I want to know is what you actually did."

"I'm coming to that. As I said, I assumed the machine was not developing its rated horse power. And as our standard motors at the factory always develop the proper power, I reasoned that this particular motor must, at some point or in some way, have fallen below the standard."

"Say, try to make this snappy. All I want is a brief report on what you have been doing."

"Well, to make a long story short, I checked over the whole motor, point by point, against the blue prints."

"What blue prints?"

"Why, the engineering-department blue prints that cover the five-ton model. I took a set with me."

"You took a whole set of blue prints with you?"

"Certainly."

"All right, all right. Go on. What did you find out?"

"Well, I found a lot of discrepancies. Believe me, I'm going to write up a report about it. What good does it do us up here in the engineering department to get out drawings showing exactly how a motor ought to be built if they don't follow them down in the production department?"

"You mean you think this motor was built wrong?"

"I know it. For instance, the blue prints call for a clearance of five-thousandths of an inch between pistons and cylinders, and allow a tolerance of one-half of one-thousandth plus or minus. I checked up with a thickness gauge and found clearances of from six to six and a half thousandths. Of course I couldn't remedy that without new pistons or cylinders or both. We'll have to send them down later. But I readjusted a lot of things. The blue prints call for valve clearances of twelve-thousandths of an inch. Some of them were as much as eighteen-thousandths. I found that the breaker points in the magneto were opening two-thousandths too much. I fixed that. I found that the float in the carburetor was—"

"Wait a minute! Wait a minute! I don't care about all these details. As near as I can understand, you checked over the motor and made a few adjustments of minor importance. Is that right?"

"Yes, except they weren't of minor importance. No trained engineer considers accuracy of minor importance."

"Well, never mind about that. Then you tried the machine, I suppose, and it still didn't run?"

"Yes."

"And what are you doing now?"

"I'm working on the oil."

"What do you mean, you're working on the oil?"

"Well, you see, I finally decided that there might be some trouble with the oil Mr. Jenkins was using. In case the flash point was too low it would rapidly lose its viscosity in the extreme heat of a heavy-duty tractor motor. The oil film on the cylinder walls would break down; there would be excessive friction and loss of compression—both of which would cause loss of power."

"So what are you doing about the oil?"

"I've brought a sample back to the factory to be analyzed."

"You brought a sample back to the factory! Say, where are you anyway?"

"I'm up here in the engineering department."

"Great Scott! I thought you were talking to me from Scipio."

"Oh, no. I came back last night."

"Holy Jehosaphat! Do you mean to tell me that, after I sent you down to get a tractor out of a mud hole, you spent two days playing around with a lot of blue prints and thickness gauges and things, and then came back here dragging a bottle of oil, and left the tractor still in the mud?"

"But, Mr. Henderson, you don't understand."

"The tractor is still in the mud, isn't it?"

"Yes, but you don't understand—"

"No, I guess I don't. And I probably never will. But I know one thing: You and I are through with each other. You can amuse yourself with your blue prints and your oil all you want up there in the engineering department. But you're not going to put on any more of these wise performances for the service department. By the way, did you put that car back in the garage?"

"Yes."

"Well, you can just leave it there."

"But, Mr. Henderson—"

"I don't care to discuss the matter. You and I are through. And you can tell your boss that I won't bother him again. Good-by."

Mr. Henderson banged the receiver onto the hook, rose from his chair, and drew himself a glass of ice water from the cooler. As he sat down again, the telephone rang loudly. Wearily he placed the receiver to his ear.

"Hello. Is this Mr. Henderson?"

"Yes."

"Well, this is Miss Gladys Jenkins. Down at Scipio. I've been trying to get you for quite a while, but they said you were busy."

"Yes, I was busy."

"But can you spare me just a moment now?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"It's really quite important. I wanted to talk to you about Mr. Manville. You remember he is the engineer you sent."

"Yes, I remember very distinctly."

"Well, when Mr. Manville left last night he expected to come back in a day or so. But before he comes I think you had better warn him about conditions down here. Especially about father. You see, father was quite cheered up when Mr. Manville first came. He thought everything would be fixed up all right. But this morning—honestly, Mr. Henderson, you can form no idea of the shape father is in. He is practically livid with rage. And he has lost all his religion."

"He has, has he? Well, I can't say I blame him."

"Then you heard about it? You heard about the trouble down at church?"

"Church? Say, I must be losing my mind. I thought the trouble was about the tractor and the combine in Goose Creek."

"It is. You see the Reverend Schwartz knew all the time that father's tractor was stuck in the creek. But he went ahead just the same, and at the services last night he offered a long prayer for rain. Father says that it was the most unchristian thing he ever heard of. He's thinking of withdrawing from the church. He says that the Reverend Schwartz might have waited a few days."

"Well, really, Miss Jenkins, your father ought not to let a little thing like that worry him."

"Oh, you can laugh, Mr. Henderson. But this morning the barometer is going down fast. And it's getting cloudy, and father is really worried. And he still feels that you ought to do something to get the tractor working right. But I don't think he wants Mr. Manville back. He seems to be irritated with Mr. Manville."

"Oh, he is?"

"Yes. You see father is a little deaf, and he couldn't entirely understand all the explanations Mr. Manville made. He doesn't realize—the way you and I do—that Mr. Manville is a real scientist. He thinks Mr. Manville just wasted two days. I'm afraid he would be very disagreeable to Mr. Manville if he came back."

"I can well imagine that he might."

"So I think perhaps it would be better if you could send somebody else. We really need somebody. Father doesn't seem to be able to fix the machinery himself. The tractor and the combine—to say nothing of that Steel Elephant tractor—are all sinking deeper and deeper all the time. And if it should rain, I really don't know what we would do with father. He would probably have to be tied down or put in a cage or something. He is so excitable, Mr. Henderson."

"Yes, I understand. I wish you would give your father a message from me. Tell him nobody regrets more than I do the difficulties he has been having. And I frankly admit that we have been slow in this matter. I haven't had the proper men to send down. But you tell him I am doing everything humanly possible, and I will see that he gets help today—if I have to go myself. And tell him that I won't send Manville."

"Oh, Mr. Henderson, that is so very kind of you. You don't know what a pleasure it is to do business with people who are so polite and courteous. And I want you to understand that personally I have nothing against Mr. Manville. I thought he was very nice."

"Oh, you did?"

"Yes. You know, Mr. Henderson, the last few days have really given me quite a thrill. So much going on. So much excitement."

"Well, I'm glad somebody has got some enjoyment out of this business."

"Oh, Mr. Henderson, I don't like the way you say that. It sounds as if you thought I was enjoying father's troubles. I'm not at all. Only we have so few visitors out here at the farm that when anybody arrives it's an event. And this tractor business has brought so many people, and such interesting ones. Mr. Sherwood was very nice. He was such a good talker. The Steel Elephant man was here a couple of times and he was most interesting. And Mr. Manville—"

"Yes, I understand. But I'm afraid I'll have to be getting back to work. If you will excuse me—"

"Certainly, Mr. Henderson. I'm awfully sorry to have taken up your time. But I want to be sure you understand that I

have nothing against Mr. Manville personally. He seemed like a perfect gentleman, and he was certainly most polite to me. And he knows so much. He told me all about how the tractor works, and all about the oil and everything. He told me he was taking some of the oil back to the factory to analyze it. I thought that was such a quaint idea."

"Yes, quaint is the word."

"I never would have supposed that analyzing the oil would have helped fix the tractor."

"Neither would I. But really, Miss Jenkins, I'm afraid you'll have to excuse me. This conversation is delightful, but I have to get busy and find somebody to send down to you."

"Certainly, Mr. Henderson. I hope this new man will be just as high grade as the others."

"Well, I sincerely hope he'll be better. Good-by."

"Good-by, Mr. Henderson."

Mr. Henderson jiggled the receiver on the hook, and when the factory operator answered he had himself connected with Mr. Gus Liebe, head of the department of final inspection and repair.

"Hello. That you, Gus?"

"It is."

"Listen, Gus. This is Gilbert Henderson speaking. We've got a tractor down at Scipio that's gone flooey. Also stuck in the mud. We got to fix it right away. And I haven't a man to send."

"Tough luck, ain't it?"

"Yes. Now, Gus, you've always been a good friend of mine, and I was wondering if you didn't have a good repair man down there you could lend me for a day or so. I certainly would appreciate it."

"Oh, I see. It's a different tune today. When you first began talking I thought you was going to bawl me out again—claiming the final inspection was no good, and so on. Like that time one of your customers got a tractor without no magneto, and you claimed we let it through the final inspection without no magneto. That was a hot one."

"Well, I'm sorry about that, Gus. I admitted I was wrong. You know that."

"Yes, you had to admit you was wrong—after they arrested the guy in the freight house that stole the magneto. But at first you was doing your best to hang it onto me. Imagine me letting a tractor go through the final inspection without no magneto on it. I'd be about as likely to come to work without my pants."

"But listen, Gus. That's all past and gone, and you know I'll never make a mistake like that again. And I'm in an awful jam. I've got to have a good repair man to send out right away. Can't you lend me one?"

"Well, let me see. We ain't so busy right now. I got a young feller here by the name of Joe Mullin. You can have him. He'd probably enjoy a little trip in the country."

"Is he any good?"

"Sure he is. All my men are good."

"All right, Gus. Much obliged. Let me talk to him, will you?"

"Just a minute."

There was a brief pause. Then: "Hello. This is Joseph Mullin."

"Well, I'm Gilbert Henderson. Did Gus tell you that you're to go out on a job for me?"

"Yes."

"All right. You get the service car out of the factory garage. You go to Scipio, Illinois, and find Mr. Henry Jenkins. He's got a five-ton that's broken down in a mud hole. You fix it and get it out. That's all you have to do. Don't waste any time fooling around or trying to be scientific or anything. And you stick around until you're absolutely sure the machine is running right. Then call me and report. And don't you dare come back until I give you permission. Got that?"

"Yes."

"You're sure you can handle this job?"

"How do I know?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, how could I know that I could fix the tractor? I haven't seen it yet."

"Well, your job in the factory is repairing tractors, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"If you can repair tractors here, there's no reason why you couldn't repair them out in the field, is there?"

"No, I suppose not. I'll do the best I can, Mr. Henderson. I've always wanted a job in the service department."

"Oh, you have?"

"Yes. It must be interesting work. But I never dared apply."

"Why not?"

"Well, I was afraid I wasn't good enough."

"What's the matter? Are you half-witted or something?"

"No, I don't think I'm exactly half-witted, but I'm not very bright. I was always pretty slow in school."

"So you don't think you're good enough for the service department?"

"I don't know. But if you give me a chance, I'll try as hard as I can. I know I'd like the work. And maybe I would get by all right."

"Yes, I suppose anything is possible. And of course the main thing you need to be a good service man is just plain common sense. Do you think you've got any?"

"I don't know."

"Say, you don't seem to know much about anything, do you? Well, suppose you wait around a few minutes. And you call Gus to the phone. I want to talk to him again."

After a minute or so, Mr. Gus Liebe spoke: "You want something more, Henderson?"

"Yes. I've been talking to your friend Joe Mullin, and I'm afraid he won't do. You're not trying the old army stuff on me, are you?"

"Army stuff?"

"You know what I mean. Every time they ask one of these

army captains to furnish a real good man, he sends the most useless guy in his outfit—just to get rid of him."

"What's that got to do with me?"

"Well, from the way this Joe Mullin talks, it seems to me he's a pretty soft egg."

"What do you mean? How does he talk?"

"He doesn't seem to know whether he can do the job or not."

"Oh, don't worry about him. He's just modest. You been associating with salesmen so long you don't know what a modest guy is like."

"But this is serious, Gus. I got to have a real good mechanic. You haven't got anybody else you could send?"

"No, I ain't. And I want Joe to go because he's interested in the service department. Maybe he might work into a permanent job with you."

"And then you'd be rid of him without the trouble of firing him?"

"Henderson, I never knew a guy so suspicious as you are. I don't want to get rid of him. But I wouldn't stand in his way if he could get a job he wanted more than what he's got. I tell you, Joe is a swell mechanic. He's as good as they come."

"He doesn't talk like it."

"What do you care how he talks?"

"You're sure he's all right? You're not kidding me?"

"Why, Henderson, I wouldn't kid you any more than I would let a tractor go through without no magneto on it."

"Well, I guess I'll have to take a chance. You can tell Joe to go ahead. And tell him to get down there as fast as he can."

"All right, Henderson. So long."

"So long, Gus."

The rest of Monday passed with no news from Mr. Henry Jenkins' tractor. On Tuesday, the long-distance operator called Mr. Henderson.

"There was a call for you just now from Scipio," she said, "but I've lost the connection. I'll give you a report later."

"Wait a minute. I know where that call is from, and it's

probably important. It's from Mr. Henry Jenkins' farm. See if you can get the connection through from this end."

"Very well, I will call you."

About an hour later the long-distance operator called back.

"On your call to Scipio, Mr. Henderson," she said, "we can't get through at all. They're having a big storm over there and all the lines are down. If I get them later I will call you."

The rest of Tuesday passed with no news from Scipio. But on Wednesday morning the telephone rang just as Mr. Henderson reached his office. He grabbed the receiver and put it to his ear.

"Hello," said a familiar voice. "Is this Mr. Gilbert Henderson?"

"Yes."

"Well, this is Miss Gladys Jenkins. I tried all day yesterday to get you, but the telephone was completely torpid. I couldn't get a peep or twitter out of it. All the lines are down. You know, Mr. Henderson, we've been having the most ghastly time. I never saw such rain. It started early yesterday morning, and it just poured, and poured, and poured. It was what they call a cloudburst. Honestly, Mr. Henderson, I haven't seen so much water coming down since that trip I took to Niagara Falls the year I graduated from high school. It was positively petrifying."

"Yes, yes, I heard about the rain. Did Mr. Mullin get there all right?"

"Oh, yes. He arrived day before yesterday. And I'm really provoked at you, Mr. Henderson. I really am."

"What's the matter?"

"Well, I don't like to knock anybody, but this Mr. Joe Mullin you sent is one of the flattest tires that ever rolled into Scipio. He's impossible."

"He is, is he? Well, I was afraid Gus was double-crossing me. So this Joe Mullin couldn't do anything with the tractor either?"

"It isn't so much that, Mr. Henderson. It's his personality. He's a regular dumb-bell. He has hardly said two words to

me since he came. He wears an old flannel shirt and no necktie, and he doesn't seem to be interested in anything but machinery. And he's so sort of sluggish—why, he spent most of yesterday in bed sleeping."

"Sleeping!"

"Yes. Probably I shouldn't have told you all this. But I was so disappointed in Mr. Mullin. You see, about all the society I get here on the farm are the people that come to fix tractors or something. And Mr. Sherwood and Mr. Manville were so interesting."

"Yes, yes. But you haven't answered my question about the tractor. Is it still in the mud?"

"Oh, no. Mr. Mullin got it out day before yesterday, before the rain. I'll have to hand it to him on that. Although it was probably just luck. Because I'm sure Mr. Mullin hasn't the scientific knowledge that Mr. Manville has."

"How about the combine?"

"Oh, he pulled that out too. And also the Steel Elephant tractor. Then he and father started cutting wheat."

"Say, that's fine! That certainly is great! You don't know what a load this takes off my mind. Old Gus was all right, after all. How does your father feel now?"

"Oh, father has all cheered up again. And I surely am thankful for that. That's the way he is—temperamental, you know. One day way down, the next day way up. He's been feeling so good the last couple of days that he's decided not to withdraw from the church after all. And he's in such a pleasant frame of mind that he actually thinks Mr. Mullin is one of the finest men he ever met."

"Well, I should think he might."

"Yes, you see father is a little deaf. He hears so little that he doesn't realize how dumb Mr. Mullin is."

"Oh. Is Mr. Mullin there? Could I speak to him?"

"Yes, he's in the next room. He told me he wanted to talk to you. He said he was worried for fear you would be sore about some things he did down here. I'll call him. But before I say good-by, Mr. Henderson, I want to thank you for everything you have done for us. I'll even forgive you

for sending Mr. Mullin. You know, I'm awfully glad that everything is all fixed up and father is in good humor again. But in a way, I'm rather sorry too. Probably now we won't have any more such interesting visitors for a long time. And I won't be calling you up any more either. You don't know how I've enjoyed these little daily chats with you, Mr. Henderson. You really don't."

"Well, that's awfully nice of you, Miss Jenkins, but possibly Mr. Mullin is in a hurry. If you would just as soon call him—"

"Certainly, certainly. Well, good-by, Mr. Henderson."

"Good-by."

After a moment's wait, Mr. Joseph Mullin spoke: "Hello."

"That you, Joe?"

"Yes, Mr. Henderson."

"Congratulations! I hear you've been getting along fine."

"Well, I'm not so sure, Mr. Henderson. I'm afraid I've done a lot of things wrong."

"You got the tractor running all right, didn't you? And you got it out of the mud hole?"

"Yes."

"And you pulled out the combine? And that useless Steel Elephant?"

"Yes."

"And Mr. Jenkins is satisfied?"

"Yes."

"You're not worrying about that fool woman, are you?"

"What fool woman?"

"Mr. Jenkins' daughter."

"Oh, no. Women never worry me. I pay no attention to them."

"What's the matter, then?"

"Well, I've done some other things down here. And I'm so new in the service department that I'm not sure whether I was supposed to. You remember you told me not to do anything but just fix the tractor and get it out of the mud hole."

"What else did you do?"

"Well, Mr. Jenkins was in a terrible hurry to cut his wheat, so I drove the tractor for him all Monday afternoon. And when it got dark, it seemed a shame to stop, so I took the battery and lights off the service-department car and stuck them on the tractor, and we harvested wheat all night. We had to stop about dawn on account of rain. But we covered pretty near eighty acres. Then I put the lights back on the car."

"That was all right. That was fine."

"You're not sore because I used the lights off the car without asking you?"

"Certainly not."

"Well, I practically wasted all day yesterday. On the company's time too. It was raining too hard to cut wheat, and I couldn't get you by telephone to get permission to come back. So I just slept most of the day. I was kind of tired after driving the tractor all night."

"That was all right, Joe; that was all right."

"Then there was another thing. One of the neighbors saw us working, and he was so interested I spent a couple of hours telling him all about the tractor. He finally decided to buy one, so I took his order for a five-ton."

"You sold a tractor?"

"Yes. I didn't know whether a service man was supposed to do any selling, or leave it to the salesmen. But this man was so anxious and in such a hurry, I hated to disappoint him."

"Nothing wrong about that, Joe."

"Well, I'm glad to hear you say so. But I didn't know what to do about Mr. Jenkins. When we stopped cutting wheat, he said he was satisfied that the machine was all right, and he wanted to pay me the thirty-five hundred dollars balance on it. Of course I didn't have any authority to collect money, but I hated not to oblige him. So I gave him a receipt and took his check. I've got it in my pocket. I hope that wasn't wrong."

"Joe, that's the best news I've heard in a long time. Before

you went down there I had almost given up hope of ever seeing a check from Mr. Jenkins. What else have you been doing?''

''I guess that's about all. Was there anything else I ought to have attended to?''

''No, I guess you did plenty. By the way, what was the matter with the tractor, anyway? What did you have to do to fix it?''

''I didn't exactly fix it. I just turned on the gasoline and started it. Then I hooked onto the combine and drove out of the mud.''

''What! You mean there wasn't anything the matter?''

''Nothing except the valve in the gasoline line was about three-quarters turned off. It let through enough gasoline to run light. But when you put a load on the machine you couldn't get enough gas, and the motor would miss and wouldn't give any power. So I just turned on the gas and started up, and everything went fine.''

''That's all you did? You didn't repair the machine at all?''

''No, Mr. Henderson. But I don't think it's my fault that this job didn't amount to anything. I know you told me to repair the tractor. But how could I repair the tractor when there was nothing to repair? And I hope you'll give me another chance on some real job, so you can find out whether I'm any good. I'll try my best. Because I really would like to be in the service department.''

''You really want to be in the service department?''

''Yes.''

''Well, I'll tell you, Joe. I won't exactly give you another chance to show what you can do. But you can come back to the factory as soon as is convenient, and come up to my office and I'll give you a permanent job as a service man right off.''

''Say, Mr. Henderson, that's awfully kind of you.''

''It is no such thing. You are doing the service department an honor by joining it. Good-by. See you later.''

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What are the personal peculiarities of Miss Gladys Jenkins?
2. What makes her various remarks humorous?
3. What essential parts of the story appear in the first section?
4. What type of man is George Sherwood?
5. Why does George Sherwood fail to give efficient help?
6. By what means does the author increase the emphasis of the narration?
7. How much of the effect of the story is due to events, how much to characterization, and how much to style and method of narration?
8. What characteristics make Harold Manville a humorous character?
9. What does the author satirize through the character of Harold Manville?
10. Why does Mr. Henderson have difficulty in finding a suitable man to send to help Henry Jenkins?
11. What effects does the author gain by telling the story in the form of a series of telephone calls?
12. What is the reader's final judgment of Miss Gladys Jenkins?
13. Make a list of all the persons named in the story. What characteristics distinguish each individual?
14. What type of man is Joe Mullin?
15. By what means does the author produce final suspense?
16. Why does Gladys Jenkins disapprove of Joe Mullin?
17. Summarize all that Joe Mullin did. In what respects is he efficient?
18. In what ways does the conclusion of the story surprise the reader?
19. In what respects is the story excellent?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"Father Is Angry" is a humorous story of American farm and business life, realistic in nature, and touched with gentle satire. The humor of the story depends upon skilfully presented incongruities in dialogue and in action. The unusual force of the story comes from its narration of incidents through the medium of a series of telephone calls, its constantly increasing complication, and its surprising conclusion. Since the author himself was for several years employed in the service department of a tractor company, it is evident that he based the story on actual experiences. Perhaps that explains why he chose to satirize gushing young women, talkative salesmen, and newly graduated, over-

scientific mechanical engineers, and to exalt plain common sense as seen in an unassuming workman.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, think of incidents in daily home life that have caused laughter. With only slight exaggeration, tell the story of some one event or of a series of events, presenting the incidents in such a way that you will ridicule pretense and emphasize the value of actual accomplishment.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. Sister endeavors to make a dress.
2. Two boys construct a canoe.
3. Father tries to improve the appearance of the house.
4. A neighbor has trouble in his garden.
5. Mother buys a patent device for household use, and then asks the family to help put it together.

SO-LONG, OLD-TIMER*

By Edmund Ware

Edmund Ware is managing editor of the *National Sportsman*, and the *Hunting and Fishing Magazine*. He has written many short stories for these periodicals and for the *American Magazine*, the *Ladies' Home Journal*, and various other publications. He has received unusual praise for the excellence of his stories.

KIT could not remember his father and mother. Sometimes he thought he could, but he knew that it was just his mind playing tricks with shadows of the past. Sometimes he closed his eyes and, staring hard against the velvet blackness, tried to see them, tried to hear their voices; but he was never able to fasten upon anything definite and, because he couldn't, there was always a deep thirsty place.

That was before he saw Laramie Jim.

One day, riding a big blue roan, came Laramie. His head was tilted back, he was singing, and with him rode a magnetic wave of mystery. His gestures and movements, in some strange way, were like the ring in his voice as he sang—daring, laughing, grand. Kit sought no longer for a memory of his father and mother.

It was after he had first seen Laramie that Kit began to think about things. He began to think about what he was doing, had done, would do. Why, for nine years he had worked as hard as a man on Joe Scammel's cattle ranch in Montana. That didn't worry him, because everyone worked. No, it wasn't that so much; but when a fellow could work as hard as a man, he ought to have a man's job, hadn't

* From *The Ladies' Home Journal*. Reprinted by permission of Edmund Ware. Reprinted by permission of *The Ladies' Home Journal*, copyright, 1927, Curtis Publishing Co.

he? He ought to be a reg'lar hand, and the bunch ought to call him "old-timer," 'stead of just "kid" or "young feller."

None of the bunch remembered the day Kit was fifteen. You couldn't expect them to, because Kit was not sure himself; but he knew it was some time around the first of May. And he knew that it was time for him to have a talk with old Joe Scammel about that man's job. When you were fifteen you ought to go on the spring round-up, and have a regular string of horses, same as the rest. You ought to be allowed to do something besides grub sagebrush, mend busted fence and milk a couple of frowzy old cows that switched their tails in your face. While the rest of the bunch—well, say! They sure had *their* fun all right—roping, cutting out, riding, doing all the things that were worth while.

There came a day a little later when Kit saw old Joe sitting on the ranch-house veranda reading a paper. He had seen Joe that way before, hundreds of times. But this time was different. Kit had been thinking about Laramie Jim and how kind of free and roving he seemed. And the sky was so darned blue! It looked bluer, too, because of a big white cloud rolling up like a castle of smoke. The grass along Dead Horse Creek was green, and the air chock-full of spring smells, so that it made your bones seem too big for your body, made you want to stretch out some, so they'd fit you better. And the bunch was talking about round-up! They were looking to their riding gear, comparing saddles, telling about the "old days." If they never let you go on round-up, then you'd never have any "old days" to tell about, would you?

Kit walked up to old Joe and stood making half-moons in the dirt with the toe of his shoe. "Say, listen, Joe."

"Huh? Listen to what?"

"Say, Joe, why'n't you give me a man's job? I'm big enough. I can work."

"What's the matter? Ain't you satisfied?"

"Well, yes. Only I thought, what with me bein' old enough and big enough, you might let me go on round-up with the—"

"Go 'way, kid. Go *'way* away! You got spring fever." Joe rustled the paper.

"Then you won't let me go?"

"Nope. Need you round the ranch. Someone's gotta do the chores."

"An' I expect that's me? Forever?"

"It's you for now, anyways."

Kit's toe stopped marking the dirt. "Well, Joe, I reckon I'll take my time." It sounded cool and proud just to drawl out that way "I reckon I'll take my time." Laramie Jim would have said it that way. Laramie had a big blue roan and a horsehair bridle too.

"All right, you young fool. You'll be back in a week."

Kit hated Joe for saying that. Joe had called him a "young fool."

Kit took his money, thirty dollars, and with it he bought some straight-shank spurs and a pair of riding boots—made in Miles City! They had two-colored stitching and round tops, and the heels were made right, because Dan Roney had said so, and Dan Roney was a deputy sheriff.

That very spring Kit got his first big job. He was hired by Al Christie to help the horse wrangler on the FUF calf round-up. Horse wrangling wasn't quite as fine as tophand rider, or rope expert, but it was a real job with the realest bunch of cowhands that ever lived. Why, say! There was Soupbone Dodge and Randy Peters, and Laramie Jim, who had shot a man!

Kit was one of the bunch, an important one. For it was he who helped with the remuda. It was he who had a hand in supplying these great riders with fresh mounts. Say! . . .

Cattle! Rattle of dumb hoofs marching; swish of a short loop; thump of a body falling. Smoke of fires; sound of a young calf bawling.

By day a farflung horizon with sharp white peaks against the blue—and Laramie Jim. By night a mystery of purple dark, laden with the scent of sagebrush, and of horses near. There were lonely voices which the presence of the bunch seemed to make more understandable—a coyote yapping on

a high divide, a dove mourning in the cottonwoods down by the creek, a solemn wind like some great person breathing from the hills. Maybe it was God. You couldn't tell, though.

Best of all Kit loved the tales they told around the fire at night. Laramie Jim told of men who had died in feuds, of men who never seemed to care a mite for death. The bunch sat near the fire with its light on their faces. The canvas of the chuck wagon moved in the wind so that it looked like a flickering phantom. Then Laramie would sing. Say! He sure could sing! He was singing the night that deputy Dan Roney and three others came hunting for Powder River Bob. They rode right into the circle of light from the fire. No one spoke. Kit recognized Dan Roney by his white beard and hair, but his eyes did not twinkle.

The light danced on bit and buckle and cartridge belt; seemed to be playing tricks with itself. The horses were quiet, but you could hear the creak of leather when they breathed. Nobody moved, and Kit felt power in the stillness.

Dan Roney reined his horse around so that without turning his head he could look at Laramie Jim. "We're looking for Powder River Bob," he said.

"Well, Dan, he ain't here."

"No, I can see he ain't. I was just wonderin', Laramie, if you could tell me anything about him."

"Why, no, I reckon I couldn't, Dan—anything at all."

"All right, Laramie. I'm—sorry."

Laramie stood up. His legs were braced wide apart, his thumbs hooked in his cartridge belt. He held his head back a little, so that he seemed to be looking down at everyone.

Pretty fine, thought Kit, and wondered if ever he could look that way, hard and cold and straight.

Dan Roney and his men rode away. At the camp fire no one spoke, or looked at Laramie Jim. They just listened to the hoofbeats dying away and away to nothing. The bunch didn't sing any more that night, or talk much either; just watched the fire, then crawled into their blankets.

In the morning Laramie was gone.

Kit watched Soupbone, who was saddling his favorite cut-horse. "Say, Soupbone. Who's Powder River Bob?"

"Why, he's an outlaw, son."

"Oh, outlaw. Well—where you 'spect Laramie Jim has gone?"

Soupbone smoothed the saddle blanket over and over again. "Son, you go over to my warbag an' get my other spurstraps, will you?"

"Where do you 'spect he's gone?"

Soupbone reached under for the front cinch. "Oh, just moved on, I expect. A feller like him likes to change his range now an' then. Kind of itchin', restless feet, son."

"Say, he's sure a great feller, Laramie is; don't you think so, Soupbone?"

"He—sure is, son."

"I wisht he'd come back. Do you think he will, Soupbone?"

"I don't know, son. You never can tell."

Big blue days rolled by, and the round-up moved up the valley. But things weren't half so fine with Laramie gone. The bunch never said a word about him, either. Why, they had just about forgotten him a day or so after he had gone.

Again Kit began to feel that they thought of him as "just a kid." They generally called him "son" or else "kid." Why couldn't they call him "old-timer"? He'd earned the right; worked mighty hard and mighty well doing it. They kind of protected him in a way, too—as if he couldn't protect himself! That was no way to treat a fellow who was old enough for a man's job. Why couldn't they expect things of him?

Days and days and weeks and weeks of "sun and saddle leather." Finally they reached the end of their territory. Their own ranges were combed clean. The round-up was done. The riders disbanded, and each "rep" rode away with a "so-long" and a wave to his friends.

Until the fall round-up and the big drive Kit would be a free hand. He would not go back to Joe's and dig postholes or mess around with chickens and milk cows, and things like

that. Some ordinary guy could have that job, but not for a fellow who had been on the FUF round-up.

Besides, there was Laramie Jim. Kit had money in his pocket, money that he'd earned himself. There were a lot of towns he'd heard about, and new country too. Maybe—say! He might as well go and hunt for Laramie Jim! It would be pretty fine for him and Laramie to string along together. Get a job down south with some big Wyoming outfit, p'r'aps.

He asked Soupbone where Laramie had gone

Soupbone, looking strangely down at Kit, said he didn't know for sure, but expected he had ridden westward. "Why, where yuh goin', son?"

"Oh, nowheres. Just goin' to see some new range. My feet feel kind of itchy, same as Laramie Jim's."

"I expect they do," said Soupbone. His hands were hidden, fumbling in the depths of his warbag. He brought out an old hat and a split-ear bridle with rosettes on the cheek-pieces. "Here, take these."

Kit took them and looked them all over. "Say, thanks. Pretty good leather in that old bridle, Soupbone."

"Yeah."

"Well, I guess I'll be goin' now."

"So-long."

"So-long."

He rode westward along the broad valley of the Yellowstone. At night he camped under the stars, or slept in the bunkhouse of some ranch along the trail. Whenever he met anyone he would stop and ask, "Have you seen my friend Laramie Jim riding along this way?" No, they had not seen Laramie Jim.

With the money he had earned he had bought a double-rigged saddle with deep stamping on the cantle. It was almost like Laramie Jim's, only 'course it didn't have the silver. His horse he had bought from Mike Sommes for nine dollars; "not anywheres near as fine as some he'd seen, but a pretty

good one for a fellow's first horse at that." It was wonderful to have an outfit all your own.

Once, in a town by the name of Forsyth, he asked a man who was standing near the blacksmith shop, "Have you seen my friend Laramie Jim riding along this way?"

The man laughed. "You mean the outlaw? Feller 't robbed the bank a week ago?"

Kit laughed too. "I should say not. My Laramie Jim's a cowhand, and a mighty fine one too. I guess there must be two Laramie Jims, mister."

"Guess there must be," said the man.

He had ridden late out of Forsyth. It was dark when he rode through Sanders, a tiny town with some scattered loading pens down by the railroad, and a few buildings which seemed somehow to be asleep.

When he rode down the main street of Hysham, a few miles beyond Sanders, it was nearly midnight. He was very tired—guessed he would maybe bed down for the night in Hysham.

All the lights were out excepting those in a saloon on the left side of the street and in a restaurant directly opposite. From the saloon windows pale streams of light ran downward to the street. Tied to the hitch rack outside the saloon were a few horses; sometimes they moved a little, and when they did they looked like living shadows.

As Kit rode near, one of the horses stepped into the light. For a moment he almost hollered with joy. But it was not Laramie's horse, after all. It was a beautiful blue roan, something like Laramie's, but he saw that it was a mare, and that the brand was on the left shoulder—different brand too. Shucks! Why couldn't it have been Laramie's horse? It would have been wonderful to find Laramie, to walk up to him and say, "Why, hullo there, Laramie. How's tricks?" Then they could sit down somewhere and talk about the bunch, Soupbone, Randy, and the rest. Then he would say, "Laramie, let's you and me string along together. What do you say to get a job riding for some big Wyoming outfit? You an' me, Laramie Jim."

He tied his own horse next to the mare at the hitch rack

and, brushing the dust from his overalls, walked stiff-legged across the street to the restaurant.

A man was coming from the saloon. Before the door closed after him Kit caught a glimpse inside the saloon, and the noises suddenly increased in volume. Men, leaning against the bar; tobacco smoke; laughter; boots scraping on the floor; faces turned toward the man who had left. The door swung to.

The man walked unsteadily toward the hitch rack and untied the blue roan mare. Kit, watching, thought he was sure a pretty lucky man to own a horse like that.

Neglecting to tighten the cinches, the man mounted. The saddle slipped and the mare reared straight up on her hind legs. Kit saw her in partial silhouette against the lighted windows. She was so beautiful that he loved her fiercely. She came down hard on her front feet, and kicked her heels high. The man, swearing, slid down over her head into the street. Still holding the bridle reins he stood up and reached for a loaded quirt which was looped over the saddlehorn. Kit held his breath.

The man led the horse into the light from the windows. Holding her head down by the cheek-piece of her bridle, he struck and struck, until the white blaze on her nose turned dark. Then, tightening the cinches, he mounted and rode away.

Kit stumbled forward. He was horrified, shaking with horror. His throat felt twisted and dry. He had to do something. He did not know what he was going to do, what he could do. But he untied his nine-dollar horse and followed. A man had half killed a horse. He would follow the man and the horse—just follow the man who had half killed the horse. That was all.

It seemed a long time later. He found the roan mare, riderless, grazing by a creek which looked very dark on account of the white mist gathering on its surface. He did not think about the man. Probably he had fallen off because he was so drunk. He was not worth thinking about.

Kit unsaddled the roan mare and pushed saddle, bridle and blanket into a clump of sagebrush. He rubbed the sleek back

from withers to rump; went to the creek, moistened his handkerchief and sponged the sore muzzle.

He kept saying things to her, not knowing that he was saying them: "Well, say! I guess I'm a horse thief now. But I don't care. I don't care at all. You don't mind, do you? I guess that wetness must feel kind of nice and squshy on your nose, doesn't it? Me, a horse thief. Say, maybe they'll come after me and get me. Maybe they'll put me in prison. But I guess they won't catch me."

Very tenderly he slipped the bit into her sore mouth. Very carefully he smoothed the blanket before he cinched on the saddle. Then, with a slap on the rump he turned his own horse free, mounted the blue roan and rode away.

Gradually it grew lighter in the east, and the little prowling wind of dawn blew down from the hills. The sun sent out some long red streamers which sparkled on the cottonwood leaves, the gray sagebrush, the stones in the creek, everything.

Kit began to look back. They might be coming after him, to get him. He decided to leave the trail and ride across the open country.

Turning to the left he rode down a long narrow valley. On one side was a divide with a scarred patch here and there where the pines could find no places for their roots. On the other side, the left, a long sandstone rimrock ran for a mile. Above the rimrock rose the hills, higher, higher. His shoulders drooped a little, and he leaned forward, resting his arms on the saddlehorn. The sun warmed his back so that he felt all comfortable and sleepy. Yet it seemed almost a year since he had rested.

"All night long in the saddle," he thought, "and all the day 'fore that." He remembered the T-bone steak and the last slice of bread he had pushed around in the brown juice.

Wouldn't it be safe to rest just a little spell? The roan mare must be pretty well fagged. She had had a pretty tough time too. Tied in his slicker back of the cantle he had some bacon, crackers and a can of tomatoes. Well, the mare sure needed some rest all right, and some feed and water.

He rode to the bank of a little creek which wound down through the valley. The mare plunged her muzzle deep into the water. "Ten swallows, old girl. That's all for now," he said, and drew tight on the reins. She threw up her head and snorted. "All right, eat some blue joint if you want to."

He let her munch for a while, then turned into a thick clump of pines. Through an opening in their tops he could see the ridge above the rimrock, a long yellow line against the blue sky. Building a tiny fire he fried his bacon on a stick. Unsaddling the mare he let her out on his picket rope to graze.

Everything was all right, now. He lay down on his back with Soupbone's old hat over his eyes.

. . . . . .

Tunka-tunk, tunka-tunk, tunka-tunk. Kit jumped to his feet. Aw, shucks! Why had he gone and slept? Why had he gone and rested here anyway? They were coming to get him.

A horseman, bending low in the saddle, rode on the wings of the wind up the valley. He rode straight toward Kit, only half a mile away, veered off into the trees, vanished.

Kit ran toward the picket rope, caught his foot on a protruding pine root, stumbled and fell. He looked down at his wrist. It didn't hurt much, just felt numb and dead. But it wouldn't move when he wanted it to. With his right hand he coiled his picket rope, strapped it to his saddle. He could hear the hoofbeats no longer. The rider must be sneaking up now, maybe with a rifle. He wished his hand wouldn't just flop when he tried to move it.

He glanced swiftly through the opening in the pine tops, and tried to work faster. Five horsemen appeared against the sky. They paused, searching. He thought one of them pointed down, but he wasn't sure, for they were a long way off. They started down the hill above the long rimrock.

The roan mare's ears pointed forward, and her head turned toward a little clump of pines. Her nostrils quivered and she nickered faintly.

Kit dropped the bridle, stared, eyes wide open and afraid.

Suddenly, just a few feet away, a man stepped into view.

"Aw—say! Laramie Jim!"

Laramie stood, smiling just a little, exactly as he had the last time Kit had seen him. Legs braced apart, hat tilted back, thumbs hooked in his cartridge belt, a smiling recklessness in his whole bearing.

Kit straightened up, flung out an arm as if he were reaching. "Laramie Jim!"

"Hullo, cowboy," said Laramie. He looked at the roan mare and gave a queer ironic shrug of his shoulders. "Where'd you get her?"

"Why—I stole her"—Laramie glanced at the riders who were threading their way single file down the rimrock—"but I'm not a horse thief, Laramie. Honest, I'm not. I mean I'm not a regular horse thief."

He walked over close to Laramie, looked up at him earnestly, told him everything, eagerly, with intense little gestures: "An' now," he finished, "they're comin' to get me."

"Well," said Laramie, "they won't!"

"Why? Oh, say, Laramie Jim. Were you with them? Were you comin' after me with them?"

"Well—" Laramie searched the hillside with a quick look. The men were riding along the rimrock trying to find a place to descend into the valley. "Well—yes. I got a little ahead of them, somehow. My horse has got speed."

In two long strides Laramie reached the roan mare. He slipped on the bridle, saddled her with calm sure movements. He jerked the latigo strap down through the cinch-ring and dropped the stirrup into place. "There you are," he said. Now lemme see that wrist."

"You think I'm a horse thief, Laramie Jim?"

"I expect the law says you are, but Justice says you ain't. Got a handkerchief?" He took Kit's handkerchief and bound up the sprained wrist.

"What would they do to me?"

"Why nothing—nothing at all. Put your thumb on that knot. They're comin' down the rimrock."

"Why wouldn't they, Laramie?" he insisted.

"Because, that roan mare belonged to Powder River Bob. And they killed him this morning, so Bob won't need him any more, now."

"Say! They got him? Then why don't I just let them catch me. Then I could tell them about it, Laramie."

Laramie hesitated, looked again at the rimrock. Two of the riders were nearly down.

"They might not look at it that way. You see when they—we—got Bob afoot back there, why, before he died he told 'em some things and they're comin' to find out."

"Well—"

"Don't say any more now. Get a wiggle on as fast and as far away from here as you can. Quick, aw—please."

The two foremost riders were in plain sight. Laramie Jim turned suddenly white.

"Why, what's the matter, Laramie?" Kit grasped the bridle reins and thrust his left foot into the stirrup.

"Nothing. Nothing at all. Hurry! Get away. Aw—please hurry."

"I ain't afraid, Laramie Jim—not with you. I ain't afraid of anything." Kit looked at him seriously. "I'll meet up with you again, won't I, Laramie?" He swung his right leg over the cantle. "I hate to go away like this."

The last rider made his way down the rimrock and came at a run across the flat.

Kit settled himself in the saddle, leaned forward a little, searching Laramie's eyes. "I asked a man in Forsyth if he'd seen my friend, Laramie Jim. And he said, 'You mean the feller 't robbed the bank?' And I said, 'I should say not, mister! There must be *two* Laramie Jims.' What do you know about that?"

Laramie looked away at the riders. He laughed. "There must be two Laramie Jims," he said. "The men are fordin' the creek now."

"Well, so-long, Laramie Jim."

Laramie reached up his hand. "So-long, old-timer!"

Kit touched the roan mare with his spurs, and she wheeled up the hillside, taking the ground in great hungry leaps. He felt the wind tugging at his hat. He felt the strength of a fine horse under him. And again and again he heard Laramie Jim's last words.

"So-long, old-timer!"

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Why does the first paragraph make us sympathize with Kit?
2. Why does Laramie Jim fascinate Kit?
3. What is Kit's daily life, as seen at the opening of the story?
4. What are Kit's ambitions?
5. How does the author make the reader realize Kit's hazy thinking?
6. How does the author make the reader appreciate the setting?
7. How does the author make the reader understand the character of Laramie Jim?
8. Why does Soupbone give Kit a hat and a bridle?
9. In what respects is Soupbone better informed than is Kit?
10. Why is Kit horrified when he sees a man beating a horse?
11. What leads Kit to become a horse-thief?
12. What does the author do to develop the climax?
13. Why does Laramie Jim sacrifice himself for Kit?
14. What is Laramie Jim's character?
15. Are there two Laramie Jims?
16. What would have happened if Kit had not ridden away at Laramie Jim's request?
17. What poetic passages appear in the story?
18. What passages present strong local color?
19. What events follow the conclusion of the story?
20. How does the story affect the reader?

HOW TO WRITE A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR STORY

"So-Long, Old-Timer" is a local color story of the Wild West, based on boyish innocence and ambition, and on manly self-sacrifice. It presents a striking picture of jaunty, reckless, lovable Laramie Jim, whose calm self-possession and daring spirit so fascinate Kit. As if it were a moving-picture, the story gives a series of sharply defined

incidents of old-time Western life in camp and on the trail. Was it the underlying spirit of the man, some stirring of natural nobility, or was it the boy's openly avowed admiration, that led the outlaw to sacrifice himself? No one can read the closing paragraphs of the story without wishing that somehow, even though it seems impossible, Laramie Jim should slip from his pursuers and gallop on into a retrieved career.

In order to write a somewhat similar story, show a person whom most people think of as wholly bad, sacrificing himself for some other who fails to see in him anything except goodness. Make full use of local color. Take the story through a series of illuminating incidents to an affecting climax.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBJECTS

1. A boy, lost in a forest, comes by accident upon a dangerous escaped convict whom he assumes to be a friendly woodsman.
2. A girl, riding over a lonely road, is injured by being thrown from her horse. She is taken home by a man for whom the police are looking.
3. A man who is fleeing with a large sum of stolen money saves two boys from drowning.
4. A sick child mistakes a burglar for a physician.
5. A man for whose arrest a reward has been offered rescues three children from a burning house.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

IMITATIVE STORIES BY STUDENTS

The stories that follow were written by students in the ordinary course of class-room work. Concerning every one of these stories by students, the instructor may ask the following questions:

1. To what extent is the story imitative, and to what extent is it original?
2. How could the author improve the story?

JOE McHALL'S "LUCKY"

By Philip Becker

(*Written in imitation of Bret Harte's "The Luck of Roaring Camp"*)

THERE was great commotion in Joe McHall's house. Joe McHall's house on the East Side always experienced confusion when Joe came home from the wharves. No one anywhere could bully Joe. He was the dirtiest, roughest, biggest man on the river. His wife, now dead, had been the coarsest woman in that section.

This day Joe's temper was on edge, and he had driven every one from the place. Then the yelling of the child, a mere bit of humanity, so got on his nerves that he bent over it as if to choke it. As he did so, the little one extended its tiny hands and gripped Joe's hairy wrist.

"The lucky kid! He saved his life that time!" said Joe, as he looked with wonder at his own big hands.

In spite of its handicap in life, the child progressed well. The salt sea air from the river, and the morning sunshine that struck into the room, worked wonders. Joe named the youngster "Lucky Lifer," or "Luck," for short.

As the infant grew, Joe reformed. He wore clean clothes

more often. He kept the house in somewhat better order. He drank less. He hit every one who made undue noise around the tenement.

Joe gave the baby strange playthings. He took home marlinspikes; he brought odd little pieces of driftwood, and he himself carved out crude toys.

One summer day Joe took "Lucky" to the pier where he directed his gang of laborers. He spread a blanket on the dock, and sometimes sprawled near the baby, at the same time giving loud commands to his rough men. Joe even made attempts to decorate the blanket.

Joe hoped that "Lucky" was contented with his life and with all his odd playthings. Nature really was the child's nurse and playfellow. For him she let the sun shine all day, and for him she made the river send out cool breezes.

Such was summer for Joe. Luck was with him, and more so than in mere name. He earned more money. He was not a jealous parent, for he gave encouragement to any one to play with "Lucky." People said: "There's a house on the East Side that beats all other houses. There's a window garden, and there's a man that's crazy about a baby."

As the months passed, Joe became a bit more prosperous, and decided to improve his house. Long before this he had rented a room to a couple, so that "Lucky" could profit by a woman's companionship, and now he proposed to welcome still other tenants and fill the place with life.

Fires in this East Side section had become altogether too frequent. Every day the fire-engines roared past, making a thunderous noise that spoke of horror. Every old house in the river district was a fire-trap. Twice on the same street within a week, fires broke out.

One night, through a series of unexpected events, "Lucky" happened to be left alone in the house for a short time. A fire that had long smoldered unnoticed, broke into flames.

In all the noise and confusion of the firemen's work, Joe returned, and at once tried to get into the blazing house. Two policemen attempted to stop his crazy attempt, but with two

punches of his great fist he laid them out, and disappeared into the smoke.

Finally, men saw him come out, with "Lucky" next to his breast. The doctor felt the child, and said, "He is dead." A queer smile lit Joe's face. "Dead?" he repeated. "Yes—and you . . ."

Nevertheless, Joe McHall cheated death, although he lived a living death forever after. He could work no more. His only thought was "Lucky," and "Lucky" it will be until he dies in all reality.

FATE

By Arpad Wigg

(Written in imitation of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Ambitious Guest")

ONE cool October night a family sat about the home fireplace. Father and mother had piled wood on the fire, so that it blazed merrily and brightened the gloomy room. The grown people were in an ill mood, but the children laughed and played on the bare wooden floor. The daughter had just finished knitting, and now sat gazing sadly at the fire. The wrinkled old grandmother was still knitting, but often stopped to look up as if in dread.

Many years before, the father had chosen this spot, not far below a dam, as a good place in which to live. When the dam had been begun there was a flourishing little town round about, but by degrees people had left to go elsewhere, deeming it unwise to live below a great dam. The plucky father had decided to remain. At night the waves of the imprisoned water lapped against the cement walls of the dam and made an eerie noise.

One of the children had just fallen onto the floor, and the other children laughed loudly. Father, mother, and daughter joined in the laughter. Then they resumed their quiet talk.

The stage-driver, who went by every day, was accustomed, on his way back from the larger town, if the weather happened to be particularly bad, to stay with the people at the lonely house in the abandoned village. He was always a welcome guest. Now, just as the family was moodily sitting around the fire and talking, the stage-driver drew rein near the house.

"Looks bad," said the solitary passenger in the coach. "Looks as if we're going to have a storm that will be a storm, and we're too far from town to reach there beforehand."

"Waal," said the driver, rubbing his chin, and looking at the threatening evening sky. "I guess it ain't fit fer a dog to be out on a night like this. We better put up with these people for the night."

The passenger agreed, and waited until the coach was on its way to the barn. Then he went up the narrow path to the house.

"Good evening, friend," said the father. "Welcome to our fireside."

"Good evening," said the stranger, as he entered the room. "It is better to be here with a blazing fire than to be out on the road. It looks bad tonight."

"Yes, yes," said the mother moodily. "It's good to have a nice fire and a warm house, better than to be out in the cold, cold world."

The stranger eyed her curiously, and then sat down and gazed into the fire as if to look for a solution to her gloom.

"It looks bad out," he repeated. "By the way, when was that dam built? I noticed it as we came down the road."

"Well," said the father, scratching his head, "I should say about twenty years ago."

Finally the family sat down with the stage-driver and the stranger guest while the two ate supper. During their meal not a word passed between any member of the family and the stranger. Outside the wind howled dismally, and blew leaves and sticks against the little house. Up on the dam, the waves lapped hungrily. Inside, however, everything was serene and quiet.

After the supper the people went back to the main room. The two children went to bed, and the mother and the daughter washed the dishes, while the father, the stage-driver, and the stranger, together with the grandmother, sat in conversation.

"You know," remarked the stranger in the course of their talk, "I've never done anything worth while. I am too slow.

I don't go around much with either men or women. I have only casual acquaintances, you know. I may leave here tomorrow, and no one of you may remember me, or even know where I come from. Perhaps I shall never come back this way. Then some day I shall be . . .'' The stranger rose from his seat, with his eyes toward the ceiling, and his arms folded across his breast. . . . ''Some day I shall be laid to rest in a coffin of wood. No silver plate on it for me! The stone at my head will be just slate!''

He sat down, eyeing the dumbfounded people. The mother and the daughter had just come in from the kitchen, and they did not notice the awe on the faces of the three others in the room.

''I'm like you,'' said the father. ''All my life I've done nothing great, to be remembered for. My life has been pretty common. I shall die as I have lived. My stone will be plain, with only my name and the dates.''

''Yes,'' sighed the grandmother, ''Such is life, and so shall it be. Here am I, old, worn, and weary. What has life given me that I can be thankful for? Nothing. Aye, nothing.''

Outside the wind whistled and howled. The trees swayed as if they would break. The very heavens threatened an unknown enemy. Up on the dam the waves pounded on the cement as if they were convicts fighting to escape prison walls. All persons out on that night must have wondered at the terror of the storm.

The teamster, who had gone out into the night with the dim light of a lantern to tend to his horses, came back again, and said to his passenger, ''Well, I see you're quite at home with the folks. If you'll pardon me, I'll go to bed. I ain't a-feelin' any too well. The weather is too durn cold, and too wet to suit me. Lucky for me that I know these people. Good-night, folks.''

''Good-night,'' answered the stranger. ''May you dream of a castle and a gravestone a hundred feet tall.''

Muttering angrily to himself, the teamster went off to bed.

Outside, the rain poured down, but inside the house the fire blazed, and all was well, except for a kind of gloom that

spread over the faces of all, perhaps caused by the shadows cast by the fire. The wind shook the house.

"Must be awfully bad outside," said the mother.

"Yes," muttered the stranger, "cold and wet. Life is no good. It has no good beginning, nor has it a good ending. There aren't any really great men like those book-heroes people dream about."

"It must be great to be a fine person," remarked the daughter.

"Hush, child, it's time for your bed." With a sigh that showed that she wished to stay longer, the daughter went obediently upstairs.

"Somehow I feel it in my bones I won't live to see the morning sun," said the grandmother. "When I was a little girl, I wanted to be a great person. I dreamed I should be a queen, or a rich woman, or at least a fine lady. Look what I am! No one knows me. No one cares to hear about me. Still, I shall . . ."

A heavy sound rent the air. Something rumbled and roared beyond the house.

"The dam! The dam! It burst! Run! Run for your lives!"

Whose was the greatest agony of death that night, the hard-working teamster, the half-crazed stranger, the disappointed old woman, the good wife, the ambitious daughter, or the two innocent children?

Not one of the little family, and neither of the two guests, made a way to safety. They all died, even as they had lived. Their bodies, with the exception of those of the children, were not recovered.

THE GOODY-GOODY

By Jules P. Wolff

(Written in imitation of O. Henry's "The Ransom of Red Chief")

"WELL, Joseph, why shouldn't we adopt that darling baby? He's so cute! His little face is so sweet!"

"Now, Agnes, I keep telling you I don't like his looks. I don't like angel-faces, goody-goodies! I want a real boy! A live one!"

"Go and get the car," commanded Agnes. "We're going to the Orphanage right now, and get the little angel before somebody else adopts him. If there's one thing I like, it's a good child!"

Joseph, a man of about fifty, slightly stooped, with graying hair, hastened meekly to do what his militant spouse commanded.

"Well, Mr. Superintendent, we'll take the young fellow. What do you say his name is?"

"You mean little Caryll, the blue-eyed, yellow-haired baby?"

"Oh yes! He's the cutest thing!" cried Agnes.

"He certainly is a handsome baby; there's no getting around that," conceded Joseph.

"We try to give all our babies good homes," said the superintendent, "I know you'll give him a good bringing-up, but such a child won't be much trouble. He'll be good naturally."

"We'll certainly do our best. You know, we never had a boy. The missus has been after me to adopt one for a long time. Of course, I'd liked a real son of my own. Now that we've got old . . ." He gave an affectionate glance at his wife.

She, on her part, snorted in indignation, and said, "What do you mean? Old? If you're going to take Caryll, he'll be our son, and what is more, heir; so you can just as well get used to that now as later."

"Certainly, certainly, dear; anything you say," quavered her husband, overawed by his wife's self-assurance. "If you say so, then it's so."

"Well, all I can say is, it had better be!"

"Of course you have the adoption papers all ready, haven't you? If you haven't, you will have to get them before I can let you take the child."

"Of course we have! We'd hardly come here without them, I think!"

"Just a second. I'll have the baby brought in." And stepping to the door the superintendent called, "Oh, nurse! Bring in Caryll, Crib 34!"

"Wah! Wah! Wah!" It was Caryll, the angel-child, crying as he had cried nightly every night of the week he had been away from the orphanage.

"If that darned kid doesn't shut up, I'll go crazy!" announced Mr. Baird in positive tones. "He's kept up howling ever since we brought him home. He's the world's champion long-distance howler!"

"Now, Joseph, how can you expect him to get used to us in a week! Everything here is strange. He'll be all right in a a few days."

"It would be terrible if he didn't!"

Just then the baby, sitting in its crib, reached out a small hand and picked up a bottle of perfume. The baby brought the bottle over to itself, gravely looked at it, as if it were saying, "Baby doesn't like old bottle!" and tossed it to the floor.

At the sound, Mrs. Baird hurried to see what had happened. Seeing her best perfume spilled on the rug, she screamed, and picked the child up with every indication that she would enjoy spanking it. The baby screamed and squawled, trying to escape the relentless grasp and the angry manner. Mr. Baird looked at his wife with a frown and said,

"Now, Agnes, you don't know how to bring up a child. You shouldn't scold. Reason with it. Use kindness. It's better in the long run."

"Joe, I know what's best for this child! You march right out of here, and let me tend to my own business! You wouldn't talk gently if he had spoiled something of yours!"

The years passed, and Caryll Baird became a lively lad of eleven, still with the same yellow curls and the angel-face. Somehow he did not live up to the promise of that angel-face. Among the boys he was the leader of "The Bridge Street Wild Cats," a gang of youngsters with an unsavory reputation for breaking windows and fighting. The Bairds confessed that they did not understand their adopted son, did not know how to correct him, and could not keep him "in the straight and narrow path." They deplored his activities, but the lad had become so used to their remonstrances that they made slight impression. In school he did well enough in his studies, but his conduct mark was always low. He gained a bad reputation through tricks played on everybody, including the teacher; through preëmpting the best places in the playground, and through fighting. Backed up by his rough boy-friends, he took what he wished and did as he pleased, with an occasional fight with some fellow who was braver than most of his associates.

Caryll's teachers, like his foster-parents, did not understand the boy, and sought to correct him by assigning extra work, and by various small punishments. They did not realize that the boy needed, not punishment, but diversion. Caryll had great energy, and an intense desire for amusement.

As time went on, the angel-child became worse and worse. An injured nose or a black eye was a common decoration, and it was only at rare times that he was not, in some part of his body, badly bruised. Finally, the Bairds, wearying of his escapades, sent him to a cousin's in a near-by city. The boy did not like his hosts, and after a few days amazed and angered every one by returning home. On being questioned why

he had so summarily left his hosts, he calmly replied, "There was nothing doing there, so I beat it. I got hitches on cars and wagons, and when I couldn't, I just walked. It was easy."

Annoyed by the impudent answer, Mr. Baird gravely said, "Young man, you just come along with me. I'll teach you to run away, and make us all think you are killed." And later he added, "And what's more, you'll stay in this yard for the next week."

The week that followed was sheer torture to Caryll. He had nothing to do from morning till night, and he could not have his friends to play with him, nor could he go out to play with them. At the end of his week's confinement he went out, ready to inflict vengeance on any helpless person who might stray within range.

His next punishment came for "hooking doughnuts," and filled him with rage against all law-enforcing agencies. He decided to consecrate his life to revenge, and he determined that he must have a dog to keep watch against enemies. He picked up a mongrel cur on the street, and brought it home, smuggling the dog into his room by way of the pantry. He kept his secret for as much as one day, until the dog shook Mr. Baird's slippers to bits. That person, mystified by the occurrence, and wisely thinking that Caryll was at the bottom of it, called the lad into his room "to talk with him."

Caryll went into the room with dragging legs and slow steps.

"Caryll, just exactly how did those slippers of mine get chewed up?"

"I don't know how they got chewed up."

"Oh, you don't, don't you! We'll see about that!"

"Aw, father, I didn't do it."

"I know you didn't. You aren't a puppy. Did you bring a dog into this house? Now tell me the truth."

"Well, father, you see, it's this way . . ."

"Is that so? I told you not to bring any dogs into this house. I want you to put that dog of yours out of here, right now."

"Aw, please! Can't I keep him? He'll be good."

"I told you to get him out of here, and I don't want any back talk."

At that moment the door was pushed open, and a small dog came gaily in. He romped up to his master, sat up, and asked to be petted.

"Is that the dog?"

"Yes, that's him."

After looking at the dog, Joseph Baird's face softened, and he said, "Well, I guess you can keep him anyway, but I do wish you'd try to be good."

ODU

By Eyolf F. Bronner

(*Written in imitation of Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle"*)

THOSE who have had the good fortune to travel in Southern Rhodesia will, without doubt, recall the jungle-overgrown ruins of Zimbabwe, about which delightful legends have been woven. These ruins, old crumbling walls constructed of stones ingeniously jointed together without use of any kind of cement, and overgrown with the dense vegetation that only the African jungle can produce, are the very heaven of the modern archeologist.

Not ten miles north of the ruins, a native village, consisting of two-score palm-thatched huts, is snugly hidden away in a small valley at the foot of a broad mountain. This little village, called Malindi by its two hundred-odd dusky, carefree inhabitants, is in the midst of a veritable paradise of game and vegetation.

Many years ago there lived in this petite kingdom an old wrinkled chief, named Omnemasda, the Wise One. And he was wise; had any one ever prostrated himself before a milder and more just chief than Omnemasda? He was democratic, too, and spent most of his evenings chatting with his warriors by the fire before the hut of his trusted lieutenant, Char Kol, "Strong Tree." But his people did not love Omnemasda as they loved his son, Odu, "The Boy."

His name was far from appropriate, for he was a tall, broad-shouldered, deep-chested young man of twenty summers, straight and slim as an arrow. His well-formed head and lively brown eyes betokened an unusual intelligence; the

muscles that rippled beneath his black skin showed his great strength. When he laughed, showing strong pearl-white teeth, the rest of the little community laughed; his constant good humor was contagious, and spread like wildfire.

When the elder warriors noticed him sporting with the children, or settling their puny disputes, they nodded gravely: truly, Odu had inherited his father's boundless wisdom and kindness.

As he grew to manhood, he had also grown to like a certain kinky-haired, black-skinned little girl four years his junior. The tropical environment and the extraordinary warm heart of Odu were probably the chief reasons why his liking for Rapli, "Small Flower," rapidly changed to love. So the youthful prince was to marry Rapli, according to the rituals prescribed by Gourmahal, "Mystic Eye," the village witch-doctor, and Omnemasda's brother.

A part of the ceremony consisted of a snake-hunt in which the bridegroom was to prove his prowess by acting as leader. Attired only in skirts made of grass strings, and bamboo leggings, every one of the twenty selected warriors carried, besides a short bow and a quiver of arrows, a long, curved wooden club with a smooth stone about the size of a goose egg lashed to the heavier end. This was the weapon to be used in killing or stunning snakes.

The course bore to the south through a well-nigh impenetrable thorn forest. This was the feature of the hunt. No one, in the memory of even the oldest inhabitant of Malindi, had ever traversed this wood. The sun was low in the west when the party finally emerged, torn and bleeding, but hoarsely shouting cries of victory, from the Forest of Spears, as they named it. They found themselves in a jungle of luxuriant vegetation—tall trees whose tops were lost in the tangled foliage above—twining plants and vines of all descriptions, pale-green grasses and bushes that grew far above their heads, little pools of stagnant, rust-colored water, and, to their surprise, occasional natural clearings.

Darkness fell with a suddenness that was appalling. A self-confident order from Odu, and the twenty warriors scrambled

into the trees, scaling the vines with an adeptness that made them look, from a distance, like so many monkeys.

An hour after dawn the party came upon the crumbling stone ruins of Zimbabwe—a paradise that swarmed with serpents. The warriors spread out, calling boastingly to one another when they stunned a snake, which, when caught, was placed in one of the many nooses of grass-twine attached, for that purpose, to short sticks.

A terrifying scream from one native, followed by unintelligible gibbering on his part, caused the rest to look in the direction in which he pointed. There, not two hundred yards away, a vast, shapeless, misty-white something was slowly approaching. At the sight of this unknown thing every one, even the brave Odu, turned and fled in mortal terror. Odu, having been ahead of his comrades, was the last in line, but in clearing a large gap between two walls, his foot landed on a light log that, pivoting on a rock, sprang up and hit him on the forehead. Odu fell without uttering a sound—and he did not see the poison fangs that darted to meet him.

When he came to himself, poor Odu found himself inside a dark, warm shelter that was open at one end. He was lying on a strange, soft couch raised above the ground, and his head rested on a fluffy white mass; a wondrously soft blanket lay over him. He tried to raise himself, but discovered that he could hardly move. He soon became conscious of an acute pain in his right leg, a throbbing in his head, and a swollen dryness in his mouth. His movement brought a tall man—a white man! to his aid. The man talked soothingly in a strange tongue, then turning for a moment to a stand, he forced a strong-smelling liquid between the stricken negro's cracked lips.

It was three days since the event of the flight from what had been nothing more than an unusually thick morning mist blown through the jungle by a light breeze. Odu had shortly afterward been discovered by two members of a private archeological expedition headed by Lord Doonshire, and he had been brought to the white man's camp, where every effort was made to save his life, and where he had lain delirious all the time. The unfortunate native prince, stunned by the blow on

his head, could remember nothing of his previous life—all was forgotten.

Even after many weeks spent on the cot, fighting the venom in his blood, Odu was not strong enough to walk; therefore, when the expedition broke camp and headed back to the Sabi River and civilization, he was carried on a litter. Although his memory was lost to him, Odu had retained his ability to understand quickly, and his originality and primitive brilliance of thought.

Marvel after marvel of the white man's civilization was presented to him—the South African railroad, the automobile, the expedition's private steamer, great cities made up of tall stone structures, inside of which people lived and worked! But most of all, Odu was surprised at the ocean. He was delighted by the blue waves and the whitecaps, the fresh tang of the sea, the dashing salt spray, and the tireless white sea gulls circling overhead.

Twenty years later, on a cold and dark night, Odu, the dusky traveling companion and friend of Lord Doonshire, was walking down Arbor Road in London. Under his arm was a copy of Irving's *Sketch Book*. He was headed for the Coloured Bachelor's Club, on Wallace Square, to discuss that strange story, *Rip Van Winkle*, with his friend, Sir George Thompson. There was something about that tale, something perplexing . . .

Suddenly two muffled figures slouched out from a doorway, and blocked his path. Odu answered a gruff demand for money by a quick movement that pitched one thug headlong into the street. The second thug's blackjack swung upon Odu's head with a force that caused him to see a million flashing stars, before he lapsed into unconsciousness.

When he regained his senses a few moments later, the thugs had left. But!—but! Out of a confused whirl there returned to Odu the complete memory of his life in Malindi. Rising dizzily, he picked up his hat and, dropping all dignity, sprinted back to the lordly mansion of Doonshire.

Tears came into his dark eyes, and a hard lump forced itself into his throat when he began to tell of Rapli, dear little

Rapli. Wonder, is she married to some one else? Is she slaving to feed another husband than Odu? Oh! he must, he must, get back to Malindi! He must find Rapli! His friends! His father!

Lord Doonshire, a kindly and sympathetic gentleman, knew what Odu's feelings were—he himself had lost his wife when she was little more than a bride. Yes, he would help Odu.

Accordingly, it was arranged that they should travel on Lord Doonshire's yacht to the mouth of the Sabi River; whence, Odu, going alone, would proceed to Malindi—to his Rapli! If he did not return within one month, Doonshire would bid the African coast farewell.

Ten days after a small white steamer had anchored in the Sabi River, the inhabitants of Malindi were astonished to see a lone warrior, cut and bleeding, and leaning heavily upon a stout spear, stumble into the village from the direction of the Forest of Spears. He was assisted to a hut, where his wounds were bathed in oil, while he was plied excitedly with questions. He told his story, but, as he soon understood, to unbelieving ears.

"Odu is dead; did we not see him fall, with our own eyes?"

"No, Odu, the hero, will never return; he is gone to the Happy Hunting Grounds, with his father, Gourmahal. This is not he," added the warrior, as he gazed keenly at Odu's face.

Odu, broken-hearted, said nothing about the subject his lips trembled to speak of.

Just then a tall, broad-shouldered native, clad only in a loin-cloth, stepped into the hut. He glanced, casually, to all appearances, at the stranger, but no one saw the flash of recognition that lighted his eyes. He appeared to be a man of power, for his command that all leave the hut was immediately obeyed. When the last warrior was out of earshot, he turned:

"Odu! My friend!"

"Dinni Zulu, Giant Man! Tell me—where is Rapli?"

The big chief's head sank. "Rapli, my friend, is gone to the Happy Hunting Grounds. She refused to take another

man for husband after you disappeared, and one summer later, she died. I myself put her into her burial place on the spirit-guarded slope of the Sleepy Mountain. How came you here?''

Odu, no longer a laughter-loving youth, looked up; then he rose to his feet. A tear rolled down his black cheek as he softly said: ''Show me the burial-place, O Dinni Zulu.''

Night had fallen when they emerged from the hut, but the stars and the moon spread a gentle light over the jungle. Big-hearted Dinni Zulu, understanding the situation, and knowing his friend well, merely pointed, and said: ''Above the lone tree. Good-by, Odu.'' And he remained standing, gazing after his friend until darkness swallowed him up.

The next morning Odu was seen, motionless, standing guard at the place of the dead. On the second, and on the third day, he stood in the same position, leaning on his spear, never moving. On the fourth morning Dinni Zulu carried food and water to the mountain, but his friend was not there. No sign, no message. Only, in the place of burial was stuck an arrow, a drooping wild rose tied to the shaft.

Odu had gone.

ADVICE—A REVERIE

By Warren Young

(*Written in imitation of Charles Lamb's "Dream-Children"*)

FEW men have as great love for science and scientific development as my brother has. From the time when he first began to receive instruction in scientific subjects, he was wrapped up in science, especially in chemistry. He entered the active field of chemistry as soon as he was graduated from college. Anything in the chemical world interested him greatly, and he was forever studying the subject. He became successful in his work, because of his love for it, and his faculty of delving into a problem and studying it until he had solved it. The more difficult the problem, the better he seemed to enjoy working it out. His was a mind that, unlike mine, would stick to a problem until it was finished.

He, unlike my two other brothers, was always my adviser in perplexity, my aid in trouble, and my companion at all times. Now, as on so many other occasions, I sought his aid in making a decision, and he, willing and ready to help me at all times, was listening patiently.

Mine was indeed a hard problem to solve, possibly the most difficult of my life, the problem of what I should do after I had been graduated from high school. How many times has this same problem beset others who, suddenly faced with the knowledge that their days of carefree pleasure and preparatory study are about to end, cannot decide what to do, nor where to turn! How many others who have had hopeful ideas for the future, have suddenly found that their ideas are not perfect, and become faced with the necessity of changing them entirely! And how many, after having reached decisions, and having set out to abide by them, change several

times later on, and finally take up forms of work far different from those which they had planned for in the beginning! There are others, too, who work to achieve their goals, then discover too late that they have not found the work for which they are suited, and remain dissatisfied and unhappy creatures for the remainder of their careers!

It is a momentous decision, that must be made with the greatest care, for it is the decision that is the turning-point of life, which makes or breaks careers, and upon which depends all the student's future happiness.

As I sat there, I was trying to decide what course I should take. I wondered, I told him, whether I should go to work here in the city for a time, and study at night. That would give me business experience, and allow me to decide better whether I really wished a college education or thought it better to go to work.

"A college education is always good to have," he said, "but I really think the best thing for you to do is to get a job and, as you say, find out for yourself whether you really wish to go to college or not. I think you would do well to go; you would profit greatly by it." Then he began to tell me of the good times he and his friends had had while attending the College of the City of New York. He told me of the way they read Shakespeare, how when they were told by the instructor to dramatize *The Tempest* they had one student at the electric light buttons turning the lights on and off while another banged on the radiator shield, to give the effect of lightning and thunder while students read their parts. My brother is the kind of fellow who always has those around him in fits of laughter. His constant fire of wit and humor keeps things lively wherever he is. His many friends always go home with stories of something funny that happened while they were with him. If they went to see a show he did imitations of the cast; if a picture, he made comical comments. No matter where they were, in fact, he was sure to find something amusing.

Now, as he talked, I was continually laughing at the way he told of his college days and of the fun that they had af-

forded. He talked of his beloved science, and how he had enjoyed the experiments they had performed in chemistry, in physics, and in biology. He told me that his training in college had made him well fitted to do scientific work later on. Immediately after his graduation from college he had enlisted in the World War. Even there his education helped him greatly. After the War ended he took a course that the Government sponsored, at the Sorbonne in Paris. The diplomas that were given, he said, were so ungainly in size that few students bothered to bring them home. After the War he went to work in a chemical plant where he enjoyed the work immensely. He finally took a position out in Indiana, and was very successful. He was popular there because of his wit, and also because of his scientific knowledge. The men he worked with consulted him to settle arguments. His constant reading of books, and his study, placed him in a position to tell them accepted views. College had given him the foundation of his training. Consequently, my brother advised me to go to college, if possible.

I suggested what my younger brother had advised me to do. He had told me of a course offered by the General Electric Company. The student, in taking the course, becomes an employee of the company. He works in the company plant during the day, and takes the course during the week in the evenings. He receives enough pay to live on, and his salary is gradually increased as his work becomes more difficult. If the student so desires, he may take the course for only one year, and then leave to continue his studies in college, or he may remain and complete the course, which requires five years' work. Meanwhile, the student works into the business, and by the time he has completed the course, if he decides to do so, he is employed by the company, and can work into a good position. My brother had, however, suggested the course as a bit of practical experience that I might gain before I decided to go to college.

When I spoke of this to my older brother, he agreed that it would be a good idea for me to take the course for a year, because it would mean that I should be on my own responsibil-

ity for that time, and at the same time I should obtain experience that would give me better knowledge as to whether I wished to go to college or not. It would give me time to decide definitely what I wished to take up.

I decided that I should follow his advice. I did not know exactly what I wished to do, so I could do no better than to take a course, such as this, in preparation for later study elsewhere.

"Yes," said my brother, "I think the best thing for you to do is to take that course for a year. That company is a good one, and if you should decide to keep on working, you could keep on, and work up in the company. When you finish the course, you will be given a position right in the company. So just go up there and work hard, and you'll get ahead all right. And above all, do your work honestly and faithfully, and you're sure to succeed."

At this moment my mother appeared and told me that supper was ready. Peculiarly enough, she paid no attention to my brother's presence. Wondering at this, I turned to tell him to come to supper, but when I looked he was not there! He had disappeared when my mother had called. I was amazed, and for a long time afterwards I pondered over it, but I said nothing. It was peculiar that my brother, who had left us three years before for further research, of which we could learn nothing, should thus appear and give me the advice that I sought. But then it came to me that this was the answer to my mental prayers for aid. I had sought not only material advice, but also spiritual help, and I had received it.

THE IMPORTANT DOCUMENT

By Jacob Udowitz

(*Written in imitation of Guy de Maupassant's "The Necklace"*)

I HAD known Tom Gorman since our college days. I met him in our freshman rush. Always a well-meaning chap, he got into everybody's way, trying to do important things.

Tom could write well, and I expressed the opinion that journalism would be an easy field for him.

"Yes," he muttered with a serious air, "of course journalism would be easy but my chosen field is to be one in which great things are accomplished every day."

He confessed that his life's ambition was to do something great. A notable dreamer was this Gorman. He begged to be appointed to the freshman executive committee, and such earnestness was not to be denied. Away shot Tom, making mountains out of mole-hills, and cutting classes so that he could interview various people. And so, for four weeks, Gorman carried on, until finally he was edged to one side by more influential fellows.

Not to be outdone, Tom thought of the college paper. Having passed his examination, he became a "cub" reporter. His rounds were the very exciting faculty offices. Not succeeding in this, he gave up his journalistic situation, and tried, unsuccessfully, to become manager of some sport.

Curious, this fellow, always trying to do something. A psychology professor expressed the opinion that Tom Gorman was not by nature a leader of men, and almost broke the poor fellow's heart. But Gorman always came back for more.

Had I not known his very soul, I should have thought him a bit insane. Every night he raved about the uselessenss of living. "What is a human being? Nothing but a piece of protoplasm, to be trampled upon by the unseen fates. What

do we live for? Nothing, but to die. Death is the only blessing given to mankind to relieve its sufferings." He often quoted his philosophic history of mankind, thus. "Man is born, suffers, and dies." He would throw himself onto his bed and sob like a babe until he was asleep. And so continued his college life.

I bade Tom good-by after graduation, with an ache in my heart. This little piece of so-called protoplasm had won itself a place in my affections.

Out in the world Tom at last sought a position in the War Department. After a successful written examination, he was told he could no longer be considered, because of physical ills. Away went Tom to a doctor, in fact, to several doctors, and came back quite all right. Back he went to the War Department, and after much ado won a place.

For some reason Tom was not favorably accepted by his fellow "diplomats." Soon he found others advanced over him, although their work was inferior to his. When important promotions were to be made, men less able than himself were chosen. Doggedly adhering to his work, Gorman waited for the next Administration to come into office.

Slowly Tom worked himself up to the position of Chief Clerk. Taking Betty Roth as a partner, he emerged on the precarious sea of matrimony. Betty was the other person besides myself who saw any good in Tom. Her influence and ready sympathy were the only factors that kept Tom from falling at the wayside. To her he imparted his troubles, and in her smile and cheerful manner he sought comfort.

An important work was to be done, the result of which would mean much. The Chief Clerk was the legitimate one to carry it out. Tom's chance had come. Away he rushed to Betty. In his attempt to explain his coming good fortune he stumbled over his words, and only after she had partially calmed him, was she able to understand what had happened. The next day the man would be named, and he would be the one.

Gorman slept little that night. His chance had come. He was to do something great.

The morning came. Tom was the first to be at work. He tried to give his fullest attention to what lay before him, but was not able to do so. He kept looking at the clock, and thought his chief would never arrive. Finally, in walked the chief, and summoned the assistant chief clerk into his office. A long time went by before the assistant came out. With a smile he told Tom that he himself had been selected to carry on the new task.

Stung to the very roots of his being, Tom turned to his work, without offering congratulations. Before him lay a basket piled with letters, but all was blurred and dimmed by tears swelling in his eyes. The hours dragged. Tom's head hung low over his work. A fellow-workman, apologizing for something, did so with a mocking smile.

Time to quit came. Tom slowly laid away his work, and started for home. He decided to walk that day. When half-way home he was stopped by a tap on his shoulder. He turned to find his assistant facing him.

"Gorman," said the assistant, getting down to business without any formalities. "I have a confession to make. I'm in debt. I'll plead ill if you'll make it worth while. It may give you a chance."

Slowly Tom grasped the idea: his assistant would plead illness, and so be relieved from duty.

"How much?" he asked.

The bargain closed, Tom became cheerful, and as an excuse to Betty, told her that the announcement would be made in the morning.

To be brief, on finding the chosen man ill, the chief selected the second assistant.

Years of the same routine passed. Tom grew old. His shoulders stooped, and his eyes sank deep into their sockets.

Then a matter of grave importance came up. The chief sent for Tom. He wished a reliable man for a certain work. Would Tom serve? After a half hour of talk, Tom received a most important document to deliver in person, in a distant place, on the following day. That evening, not trusting the document in any but a safe place, he put it among the envelopes

that held his college notes. Who would look in such a place for an important document?

The next morning, when he went to find it, no document was to be seen. Some one had taken it! But what spy would think of looking in college notes to find an important paper? Tom went through everything. He threw things hither and thither, but no document could he find. With a haggard look he sat down, without revealing his trouble to his wife.

No amount of tactful questioning by Betty could bring a satisfactory explanation of Tom's strange mood. Gorman saw himself walking slowly to the office, and not going directly to the chief to explain his failure, but waiting until he should be called for. He saw the chief as he asked what he had done, and himself answering, "Well,—er—er."

To search further was in vain. He imagined the letter he would write:

"Sir:

I hereby give notice of my resignation. I failed to safeguard the document entrusted to me. Please use no effort to locate me. Kindly inform my wife. I am sorry, but she will be better off without me.

Thomas Gorman."

Then he told Betty his trouble.

"A document, you say? Why! That must be the loose paper that I stuck into one of your old college envelopes. It was out, and I put it with the others!" laughed Betty.

THE MYSTERY

By Frank J. Spacek, Jr.

(*Written in imitation of Fitz-James O'Brien's "What Was It?"*)

THIS is a story based on the relating of certain incidents, by an old Indian, while lying on his death-bed, to a friendly traveler. These incidents were told by the traveler to other people, and now we have the story. The dying Indian said:

"Many people will not believe my story, but it is true. I was present when these strange occurrences were seen."

I hope, in retelling the Indian's story, to put it in as simple and explicit a manner as possible.

It seems that among the Indians in the southwestern part of the United States, there lived an old medicine man who had been the witch-doctor of his people for sixty-five years. This witch-doctor was known far and wide for his wonderful magic, and was respected by every one in the tribe, including the chief. He could converse with spirits, make healing medicine, and predict good weather. He spent a large part of his time gathering wild roots and herbs with which he made secret medicines. He spent two years in making one kind of medicine, never coming out into the open, nor taking part in talks at council fires.

In this tribe were two young warriors who gathered roots and herbs for the witch-doctor, but who were never permitted to enter his lodge. These men, Flying Cloud and Swimming Deer, told of mysterious conversations that they had heard taking place within the lodge during the night. The people of the tribe said that the medicine man was talking to spirits. Not long after this the old medicine man finished making his

new and wonderful medicine, but he never had a chance to try its power, for one morning soon after, Flying Cloud found him dead in his lodge. In his left shoulder was a ghastly wound. Flying Cloud said, "It is the death-bite of an evil spirit."

The sudden death made the tribe afraid, and many wished to move the village from the neighborhood of the witch-doctor's lodge. Their chief, however, ordered that the lodge should be sewed up and the body of the dead medicine man be left within. Then he stationed two warriors to guard the lodge, and allowed no one to go near it.

"Unless we move, we shall all be killed by the evil spirit," murmured the people of the tribe.

For a time nothing happened. Then mysterious noises were heard, and strange lights seen within the lodge of the dead witch-doctor. A spiral of smoke arose from the top of the tepee and formed a cloud that hung over the camp, shadowing it in gloom. The people fled, leaving all their belongings behind, and settled in the mountains, still dreading the evil spirits. On the contrary, the two men who had helped the medicine man were curious to find out what caused all these mysterious noises and the spirals of smoke. Swimming Deer said to Flying Cloud, "Let us go back and find the evil spirit."

Flying Cloud was willing and eager, and so they started out on a journey to their old camp, taking only enough food to last them a few days. Long before they reached their destination, for they camped long on the way, they exhausted their supply of food, and both became weak and sick.

At last, they reached the old camp-site. All the lodges were overgrown with weeds and grass, and a sombre shadow hung over the place.

"It looks like the village of the evil spirit," said Flying Cloud.

"Yes," replied Swimming Deer, "but let us not be afraid."

The two men made their camp in a grove near-by, and re-

solved to rest before making any investigations. So far they had seen and heard nothing.

The next day they made close observation of the witch-doctor's tepee, and found that the sewing had been cut, and that from the inside of the lodge everything was missing, including even the body of the dead medicine man. However, on still closer examination, they found that the lodge contained one thing, and that was the bowl of medicine, the last that the medicine man had made. It stood in a corner of the lodge, all by itself.

The men went back to their camp in the grove, and from there kept watch during the night. They heard noises that they had never heard before, and within the haunted tepee they saw mysterious lights.

The following day a great storm blew down all the lodges except that of the medicine man. Then for a week the storm raged, while the two men cowered on the ground.

"We shall die," said Flying Cloud. "Let us take some of the witch-doctor's medicine."

"We shall both die," answered Swimming Deer, "so let us die together."

Each drank so deeply that when they had ended there was no more of the medicine left. The storm abated, and they fell into restful sleep. That night they were awakened by an unearthly noise, and were attacked by some wild creature. The night was pitch-dark, and they could not see what it was that fell upon them, but they fought with all their strength, and so at last they overpowered the thing. In the darkness they could feel its warm hairy body and its beating heart. With leather thongs they tied up their captive. Then Swimming Deer started a fire so that they could see what manner of thing they had caught.

As the light increased in brilliance they looked at the place where the thing lay, and there they saw nothing but a struggling set of leather thongs, but they heard convulsive breathing, and the sounds of struggle.

"This is indeed the home of the evil spirit," gasped Flying Cloud.

"Yes, we must flee!" answered Swimming Deer.

"No," said the other. "We must take the conquered spirit back to our people, and show them that the spell of fear and dread it has cast over them has gone."

Using all their courage they approached the thing and felt it with out-stretched hands. They felt a warm, struggling body, but they could see nothing.

For the rest of that night Flying Cloud and Swimming Deer sat huddled in a corner of the tepee, listening to the struggles of the captive spirit.

The next morning they began the return journey to their people, carrying the heavy burden of the captured but unseen spirit. They placed food before it, and saw the food disappear, but how they could not tell. For seven days they toiled on. At last they reached the camp. They walked between the great tepees up to the lodge of their chief, and asked to sit in council with him. They were admitted, and there they told their story of the capture of the evil spirit by means of the medicine that had made them strong.

"We can now go back to our old village," said Swimming Deer.

"But where is this evil spirit?" asked the chief.

"It is sitting by the fire with us," said Flying Cloud.

The chief sprang up in frenzy and ordered them from his lodge, bidding them, on pain of death, never to return. Then the two men tried to prove to the people of the village that they had the evil spirit bound with thongs. They could induce no one to touch the thing they had tied up. Then, to show the people that they really had a captive, they took the evil spirit to the bank of a stream, and threw it into deep water. Immediately there arose a great splashing that terrified the people. Now the chief, who had witnessed the demonstration, ordered them to pull the thing out of the water, and to burn it at the stake.

That which they had captured was tied to a stake, and brush piled around it. A fire was started, and the thing burned. As it burned a spiral of smoke arose, and hung in a cloud over the village. The next day the people found a

charred mass of something that resembled a man, but so deformed that it was hardly recognizable.

Now the people moved back to their former camp, but no one ever again went near the site of the old medicine man's lodge. Nothing more of a mysterious nature was ever seen or heard by any one in the tribe. To-day the old men still tell the story at their council fires.

THE MASTER

By Edward Carr

(*Written in imitation of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Oval Portrait"*)

CRASH! The express had become a mass of twisted steel, smoke and flame. Wounded and frightened passengers shrieked. Falling objects, hot flames, shattered glass, and confusion were everywhere. A general emergency alarm was sent to near-by towns, and wounded passengers removed to tender care. Among the first to be taken to a hospital was Paul Faher.

Under such conditions Paul Faher made the acquaintance of Jeanne King, the woman who nursed him, and whom he married soon after his recovery. Neither Paul nor Jeanne had any living relatives. Paul had come from California, and had been on his way East to seek fortune as a pianist and composer.

The newly married pair arrived in New York City with exactly one hundred and fifty dollars between them. Paul tried hard to find work as a musician, for he was an excellent pianist and a good composer, and had written songs that had been successes. Now, try as he might, he could get no work. The weeks passed, and with them most of their money. The bride and groom moved to a cheaper room. More weeks passed, and still Paul could find no employment.

Finally, all their money was gone. New York City is cruel to strangers, and not being a skilled workman, Paul could find no place. Then Jeanne won a position as waitress in a cheap restaurant. The hours were long and the pay small, but her work enabled them to get along. Then Jeanne found a job for her husband as dishwasher in the same restaurant. Neither Jeanne nor Paul liked their work, but each was determined to better their condition in life. They saved what they could, and moved to a still cheaper room. The counter-

man at the restaurant became ill and left, and Paul got his job, with a slight increase in pay. He begged Jeanne to stop her work, but she flatly refused, and showed Paul that they must work together for a while longer.

In the evenings Paul and Jeanne planned for the future and dreamed of happiness. One evening Paul accidentally knocked from the wall a portrait of an old man. The picture fell upon the post of a chair, which broke the glass, and fell to the floor, ruined.

"Don't throw away the frame, Paul," said Jeanne. "I have an old picture in my trunk that may fit."

When she had found what she was looking for, she tore off a paper and called Paul.

"Why! It's a picture of yourself!" he exclaimed. "And you've never shown it to me!"

"I must have forgotten all about it," said Jeanne, "or I should have shown it to you before."

Paul looked at the portrait for a long time, and then said enthusiastically that both she and the picture were equally lovely.

"I'm glad you suggested some use for the old frame," he said. "The picture will be a perfect fit."

Weeks flew past, and Paul was able to stop Jeanne from working. He himself worked hard for her, and they got along well for a time, and saved money.

Paul was really a master pianist and a good composer. He spent evening after evening practising, and composing new songs that he hoped to sell. At last he won a place with a publishing house, where he earned a good salary, as well as royalties from his songs. The pair moved to a cozy apartment full of light and sunshine.

Paul thought that Jeanne was happy now, for he did not see that she was growing pale, that the hue in her cheeks, and the gleam in her deep brown eyes were fast disappearing. He himself was wrapped up in his work. Jeanne always praised that work, although in her heart she hated it, yes, hated it because his work was her rival. It robbed her of companionship, and she could not fight back. Still, Jeanne did not wish

to discourage Paul from his efforts, because she knew he loved her, and really carried on his work for her. She was patient, therefore, and more and more became Paul's inspiration.

At last Paul won the great success he had worked for. Publishing houses clamored for his songs. He was hailed as a master, yes, as a master composer and song-writer. Long, long before, Paul and Jeanne had come to New York. Now, at last, Paul had become famous.

As the master musician worked harder and became more famous, his wife grew weaker. She had worked too hard, and had borne too much. One night as Paul lay reading, he stretched out his arm. As he did this he unexpectedly hit the electric lamp, and thus threw its rays on the oval picture of Jeanne, which hung in a far corner. The illuminated picture was more beautiful than he had ever seen it before. Two days later, out of that flash of inspiration, he had written a song in honor of Jeanne.

"Sing it to me, Paul," she said, with a far-away look. Paul played, and sang his greatest song, the work of a master. When he had struck the last chord, he heard no sound, no word of praise; there was only a silence. Softly Paul walked to the door of his wife's room. There she lay, beautiful, still, and pale. As he gazed at her he became chilled. He called her, and she did not answer. She did not move. She was dead.

Days later, as he sat and mused in his loneliness, he thought: "She was a beautiful girl, full of life and joy. I was a musician. People called me 'master.' I worked hard for success, and I won it. Jeanne was my inspiration. She spurred me on. Wrapped in my work, as a true artist must be, I could not see the countenance of my wife. Only of late did I see that she was no longer the girl of the oval picture. She was still beautiful, but oh! so pale! The master has finished his work. On the piano is my greatest song, 'Jeanne.' My work is done. My inspiration! She! Jeanne! . . . is dead!"

MONEY AND MOTHER

By Casper T. Olson

(*Written in imitation of Frank R. Stockton's "The Lady or the Tiger?"*)

CHARLES WHITE was the main support of his younger brothers and sisters, and his aged mother, whom he loved beyond all else. His father had died while Charles was a mere lad. Since then he had been compelled to aid the mother in supporting the family, and had been deprived of the opportunity for higher education. If it had not been for a Mr. Williams, a member of the church that he attended, Charles would not have held the good bank position to which he had worked his way.

The mother's hardships had told on her health, and there was hardly a day when she could be sure how she would feel on the following morning.

One fine spring day she got up as usual, but after having prepared breakfast, she was stricken with pain. The physician wrote out a prescription, and said, in an aside to Charles, "My friend, some day you must send your mother to the hospital, the sooner, the better. However, it is not a matter of life and death just now. Let me know within a few days what you would like done."

Charles stood spellbound. Just as the doctor was opening the door he touched him, and in a low voice, so that the mother could not hear, he asked, "How much would an operation cost?" Low as the figure was, he staggered a bit when he heard the doctor's answer, and the words, "Should the operation be neglected, you might lose your mother."

Charles stood alone in the dining-room, and heard the clash of dishes in the kitchen, where his two sisters, both much younger than he, were at work. Ethel, who was sixteen, at-

tended high school, and Nancy, who had had a birthday a few days before, was just finishing grammar-school. Suddenly Ethel ran into the dining-room and took Charles by the hand. "Brother, Sis and I will help," she said soberly.

Charles was in a daze, and when he went out he half stumbled down the narrow stairs. On his way to the office he saw no one, for he was still in a dream. At the office he hung up his hat and sat down to work, but figures blurred before him. Then a cheerful voice greeted him, "Hello! How are you to-day? Busy, aren't you?"

"Yes," answered Charles, hardly knowing what he said.

"That's the way successful men are made," answered his employer, and with a "See you later," he closed the door of his private office.

All the forenoon Charles could not concentrate on his work. Later, in a restless mood, he went out for lunch. In the lobby he came upon Bob Troy and Mike Scalzo, two of the bank's employees who were especially friendly to him. When he came back from lunch, Bob and Mike were still in deep talk. As he neared them they stopped and called out the usual "Hello."

Charles returned to his desk and opened the roll-top, but, as before, he could not distinguish the figures before him. He could no more concentrate on his work than he could jump to the moon.

Suddenly Mike tapped him on the shoulder and said, "What's the trouble, Charlie? You look gloomy about something. Bet I can guess what it is."

"What is it?"

"Well, it's got something to do with money, or with trouble at home."

"Right you are."

Then, after a few words more, Mike said, in a low voice, "How would you like to pitch in with Bob and me, and make some money? We know some pretty good investments that we can turn over in a day or two. But listen, this is confidential. Don't breathe a word to a soul. If you haven't the money yourself, perhaps you can borrow some for a couple of days."

Instantly Charles knew what the men had in mind. It was

within his power to use money that belonged to the bank, and to hide the use for a very short time. Mike and Bob, he knew, were most successful in speculation, that they carried on secretly, and they had never been known to lose. He could borrow the money, realize the profit, and then put the sum back. No one would be the wiser, and the bank would lose nothing. No, he couldn't do that.

"Count me out," he answered. "I haven't the money, and I couldn't borrow it from any one."

"Think it over, and let us know before the day is done," said Mike. "Don't give out a word."

Charles sat with money staring him in the face. The men had never lost. He felt sure that they would not lose now. Again he was unable to work. Should he be strictly honest, and, perhaps, let his mother die, or should he be dishonest and save her?

Four-thirty. Time to leave. He picked up his hat, and was just going through the outer door, when Mike and Bob met him.

"Well, what say, Charlie?"

C. Harvey